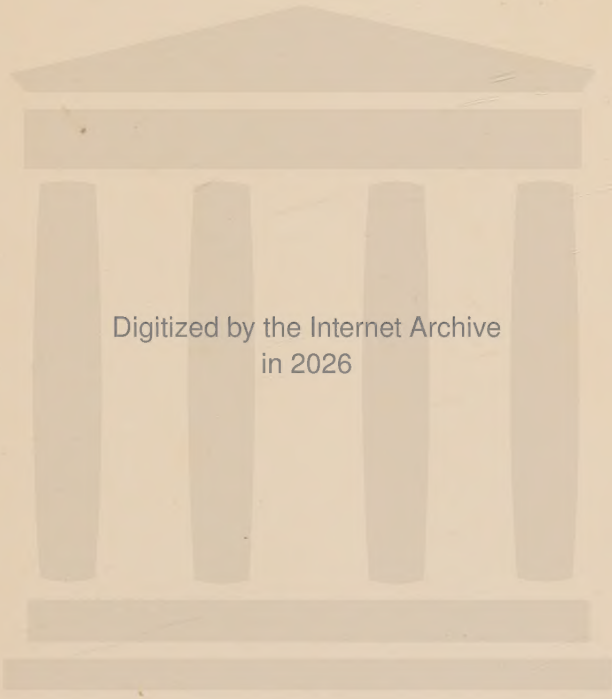
# AFTER PRISON—WHAT?

MAUD BALLINGTON BOOTH

33

33
34
35
37
41
51
54
58
61
73
176
179
187
Chap X p 217
239



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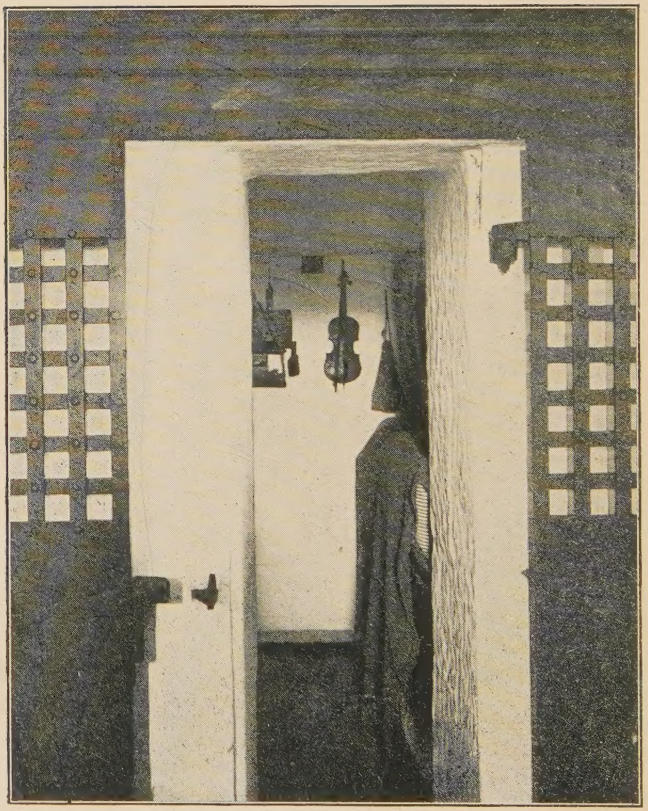

A LIFETIMER'S CELL

# *After Prison—What?*

*By*
*Maud Ballington Booth*

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## *DEDICATION*

*Lovingly dedicated to our boys in prison by*
*their Little Mother*
*who*
*believes in them and looks with confidence*
*to a bright, victorious future*
*when they shall have lived down*
*the old, sad record, stormed the walls*
*of prejudice,*
*wrested just recognition from the skeptical*
*and*
*answered convincingly the question,*
*"can a convict be reformed?"*

# Preface

THIS message from my pen is not a work on criminology or penology. No gathering of statistics, nor comparative study of the works or theories of learned authorities on these subjects will be found within its pages. It is just a plea from the heart of one who knows them, for those who cannot voice to the world their own thoughts and feelings. We ask no sentimental sympathy or pity, no patronage or charity, but only understanding, justice, and fair play.

My point of view is that of the cell. All I know of this great sad problem that casts its shadow so much further than the high walls of prison I have learned from those for whom I work, and my great joy in every labor is the knowledge that "the boys" are with me. In speaking of them thus I do so in prison parlance; for just as Masons on the floor call each other "Brothers"; soldiers in camp "Comrades"; men in college "Fellows"; so we of the prison use the term "The Boys," and leave unspoken that hated word "Convict," which seems to vibrate with the sound of clanging chains and shuffling lock-step.

If I do not write of others, who, during the past century, have worked in prison reform, it is not that I have disregarded their efforts, but as this is a record of what I have personally seen and learned, space and time will not permit the recording of experiences which can doubtless be read elsewhere.

In sending forth these pages of personal experience I pray that they may stir the hearts of the free, the happy, and the fortunate throughout our dear country, that they, in their turn, may champion the cause of those who cannot fight their own battle, giving to them the practical help that they so sorely need.

# Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Gold in the Mine | 11 |
| II. | "Remember Me" | 29 |
| III. | The Volunteer Prison League | 48 |
| IV. | The Power Behind the Work | 81 |
| V. | Letters from the "Boys" | 103 |
| VI. | Unwelcomed Home-coming | 115 |
| VII. | Welcomed Home | 141 |
| VIII. | The Same Story from Other Pens | 170 |
| IX. | Life Stories | 194 |
| X. | Wives and Mothers | 217 |
| XI. | Santa Claus Resurrected | 241 |
| XII. | Prison Reform | 255 |
| XIII. | Does it Pay? | 273 |

# After Prison What?

## I

### GOLD IN THE MINE

Long before the discovery of gold in Australasia, geologists had pronounced the strata auriferous. They had propounded to the world their theories and scientific conclusions on the subject. Those who read undoubtedly gave respectful credence to their interesting treatises because of the learning of the writers, and then as quickly forgot the facts that had not very strongly appealed to any personal interest. No one thought it worth while to sell out business, and leave home to risk or venture anything on the theories advanced. The gold lay there untouched until one day some shepherds from the bush came into Melbourne and displayed fragments of rock encrusted with glittering yellow particles which were found to be pure gold. After that people believed, for they had seen and to almost all the world "seeing is believing." The shepherds knew nothing of geology. They could not speak of the strata, but they had found and could show the gold, and

in their footsteps tens of thousands followed in the great rush that opened up the mines and sent forth to the world the vast wealth that had lain hidden for ages.

Many who have faith in the hopefulness of all human nature have believed and told the world of their belief in the possible reformation of criminals. They have argued that every soul is precious in the eyes of the great Father in heaven, and that beneath the stain and dross of crime and sin must always be some grain of gold worth redeeming. Their great difficulty is to convince those who are hopeless as to human nature and who, seeing very vividly the evil, have not the discernment to see beneath it any possible good.

To the world at large a State Prison has been looked upon as an abode of the utterly evil, depraved and good-for-nothing. In the slums are the unfortunate victims of drink, the helpless poor and straying ones who can still be sought and saved, but in the prisons are those whose lives are spoiled and ruined beyond repair. Many of course give the subject no thought and their prejudices are the result of utter ignorance. Others form their conceptions from the sensational accounts of notorious criminals whose deeds have been exploited in the press. Some, perhaps, base their unfavorable judgment on the theories advanced against the possibility of re-

forming the criminal, and speak as if our prisons were full of perverted degenerates, at the mention of whom it is proper to shudder and about whom one can speak as of some species of human animal quite alien to the common thoughts, feelings, instincts and possibilities which are possessed by denizens of the outside world. How truly may it be said that prejudice builds a higher, thicker wall around our prisoners than those of brick and stone within which the law has placed them. Naturally in my extensive travels all over this country and my personal contact with people of every description, I have had ample opportunity to guage the thought and feeling of the world towards those in whom I am so deeply interested, and, though during the last few years I have seen with joy a very marked change of feeling, there is yet much gross miscomprehension of the whole subject.

Those of us who have become familiar with the question on the inside of the walls have found a veritable gold mine of possibility. We realize fully however that it is only when they see this gold for themselves that the world will lay aside its doubting for faith in the future of these men and, casting to the wind prejudice, will stretch out a friendly hand of good-will to those who come forth from the testing furnace.

We realized in the early years of its history

that such a work as the one of which I write could only be seen and appreciated by the world at large in the years of the future when our "boys" had come back into liberty and had had time to prove the genuineness of their purpose. Already this day has dawned, and all over the country the forerunners of the thousands still to come are proving that the work is no experiment, though naturally many have neither seen them nor looked into the lives of those still in prison. It is hard to make the wholly uninformed concede that any good thing can come from such a place. Many a time when talking to friends after some drawing-room gathering, at a dinner table or in the cars, they will say with a look of almost compassion, "But are you not afraid to talk with these men? Is it not very dreadful to have to come into contact with them?" I try to explain that they are my friends, that the respect, courtesy and attention I receive from them could not be excelled in any circle of society; but the raised eyebrows and incredulous looks tell plainly that I have not answered the question, simply because to their minds all criminals are of the same stamp as Tracy, the James brothers and Czolgosz. They cannot conceive of men of education, refinement or gentlemanly instincts in prison.

Constantly I am asked, "But how can you

talk to these men; what can you say; how do you touch or appeal to such an audience?" I answer, "Precisely as I should to any lecture audience or from the pulpit of any fashionable church." I am talking, not to the criminal with the theft of a pocketbook or with manslaughter, burglary or murder on his record but to the man, to the soul, the heart. It is just here that a grave error could be made. If we always associate the prisoner with his crime, with the stripes, the cell, the surroundings, we get wofully far away from him and even find ourselves beyond the point where we can reach him at all. The crime was one incident of his life, his imprisonment is but the fact of to-day. Before he was a prisoner he was a man, and in the future world he will be simply a man, so why not talk to him and think of him as a man to-day. A lady was recently being shown over a penal institution (which will remain nameless save to say that it was not a state prison), and the officer who was explaining the system took her from room to room that she might understand their régime. He showed off company after company as a professor might exhibit specimens in the different classes of zoology, talking of them loudly in their hearing. At last coming to one of the lower grades he said, "You will note the inferior intelligence of these men, their poorer develop-

ment. These are much lower in mental and moral capacity and there is very little hope for them. They are many of them very degraded and seem devoid of moral instinct." Certain malformed heads and many poorly nourished bodies were pointed out and all this while these classified animals stood listening. How should we like such an experience? What thoughts passed through those minds, what fierce hate, what hopeless despair may not have swept over them as they listened to the summing up of their case?

Prison communities come from no uncivilized island where they form a different species of the human family nor are they drawn from one section of the population confined to the slums. They are from the great, wide world at large. Some have had homes of ease and comfort and have been educated in our finest colleges and schools. Society gives its quota, so does the great world of the common people, while yet others come from homes of poverty and some from no homes at all. There are the educated and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the industrious and the idle, the brilliant and the poorly endowed. In fact our audiences in Prison are much like the audiences that we meet in the free world, save that their hearts are sore and sensitive and that that great shadow of suffering, the awful

loss of liberty, has brought anguish, despair and shame to quicken every feeling. Nowhere have I found audiences more attentive, earnest and intelligent than in prison and I find all who have had any experience will compare them most favorably with those of the outside. One thing is very evident—superficiality, seeming and artificiality have been swept away by the close and bitter contact with life, hence the real man is easier to recognize and reach. They in their turn are quick to read and judge the speaker behind the subject, the faith behind the doctrine.

Another gross misconception is the belief that all men in prison are dishonest. People forget how many and devious are the causes for which men can be imprisoned. Sometimes when I have asked a business man to employ one of our "boys" the answer has been, "I am in sympathy with your work and pity these poor fellows, but in my business I dare not do it as there would be opportunities to steal and it would not be right to those whose interests I must protect." This has shown me how constantly the thought of theft and robbery is associated with all who come from prison. There are many within the walls who have never misappropriated a cent. This does not mean they are guiltless, for their crime may have very justly brought them to conviction but there is no reason to imagine that

because of that punishment they must be ranked as dishonest.

Then there are those within prison walls who, though evil well nigh all their lives, claim our sincerest pity. They may have done desperate deeds, may perhaps be ranked as habitual criminals and may represent to-day the most hardened and determined offenders and yet in strict justice they should not be spoken of with harsh condemnation, before the sad pages of their lives have been read. The judge and jury take cognizance only of the offense; the police and prison record note the list of charges and the number of returns to prison but those of us who seek to know the man beneath the criminal have a right to go back and ask ourselves, "What chance did this man have to do right, to act and to be as we are?" The answer sometimes is a pathetic revelation of a loveless babyhood and childhood where blows and curses took the place of kiss and caress; a youth where revolt against society in an embittered heart made it easy to develop every evil tendency and to follow the lead of those in the under-world who proved the only possible friends and associates.

Many, many letters have I received from just this class of prisoner. I remember especially one that spoke of such a history. It was written just after my first visit to Joliet State Prison and

was in the natural unrestrained language of one who had never learned the art of deftly turning sentences. He began with an apology for bad spelling and poor writing in which he explained that it was the first letter he had attempted to write in seven years, for he had no one in the world who cared whether he lived or died. Then he thanked me for what I had said to them Sunday, adding, "You said you loved us. Nobody ever said that to me before in my whole life and I hardly know what the word means. You spoke of home. The nearest approach to it I ever had was my time in the kitchen of one of the state prisons where the officer was very kind to me." Briefly this was his story. He was born in a poorhouse in Ireland and never knew father or mother and received in childhood no touch of love or sympathy. When still very young he was sent out to work and soon found evil companionship and was led into trouble. He came out to this country only to continue on the same path which was in fact the only path he had ever known. It naturally led him to state prison and his whole life here has been spent within the walls except for the few short holidays in the slums between the day of his discharge and the next arrest. All through the letter I could see that he had never dreamed there was another life for him. He confessed he

had never tried to be good, had had no inducement or chance to be so. Very pathetic to me was the closing sentence in which he said, "Now that I know somebody cares, I will try." Let me diverge from my point enough to add that he made a success of the effort and became an earnest member of our League. On his discharge from prison he had a happy experience at our Home and from there launched out into a new life. He soon proved himself a good workman and in time became the possessor of a happy little home of his own and has for several years been a useful member of society.

I have mentioned but one but I could fill a volume with such stories. I do not think that the happy and fortunate in this life need look upon it as foolish sentimentality to pity the prisoners. Surely our pity is no more misspent upon them than upon the heathen for they too have never seen the light that they might follow it.

A young man came not long since to our Home. He was a poorly developed, broken-spirited, frightened looking boy. His parents died when he and his brothers and sisters were very young. He was brought up in a juvenile asylum, bound out to people who were hard on him, ran away and herded with criminals. He never knew home, love, sympathy or friendship. Our Home was the first true home he had ever

known. It took weeks to work a change in the physical, mental and moral attitude of the man but when the change commenced it was wonderful to notice how he developed. Naturally he became devotedly attached to the one bright happy spot in a very sad and gloomy life. When we sent him out to his first position which was some way from the Home, he broke down and sobbed like a child whose vacation is over and he was so utterly homesick that those who had offered him employment had to return him to us so that we could place him somewhere nearer the Home, for, as they wrote, they feared that his homesickness was incurable.

Again wholesale condemnation should be withheld by the thought that there are some innocent men within prison walls. It is natural that justice should sometimes miscarry and yet alas, the stigma and brand remain with the man even after his innocence has been proved. A man was sentenced to life imprisonment for murder and served sixteen and a half years. Most of the evidence had been purely circumstantial and he was convicted mainly on the testimony of one witness. He was only saved from the gallows by the earnest efforts of those who had known of his previous good character. Last winter the woman who had borne witness against him came to what she believed to be her deathbed and

sending for the priest she confessed that she had committed perjury. The matter being brought to the Governor, the man was at once liberated. To the world into which he passed nervous, unmanned and broken, he will always be an "ex-convict."

At the present time I know a man who has served nine years and is still in prison where he has been visited by the boy whom he was supposed to have murdered. His "victim," a mere child, disappeared and this man, a tramp who was overtaken in the forest by a search party was held responsible. Some years after his conviction to state prison, the boy returned from what proved to have been a runaway adventure, alive and well. It is sometimes very hard work to make the wheels of justice turn backward for those once confined within prison walls so the man who was poor and friendless is in prison still.

A young German who was a member of the League told me one day his story, not with a plea that I should help him for my "boys" know that my mission is not to get them out of prison, and I found he was serving an eight years' sentence for an offense of which at the time of his conviction he was utterly ignorant. When arrested he could speak no English and understood absolutely nothing of his trial. He had no

friends and could make no appeal and when he found himself within the prison walls, he asked to be enlightened as to what he was supposed to have done. He was a very bright fellow, a skilled workman and when he had mastered the language, he very much impressed all who knew him with his honest straightforwardness. I brought the matter to the notice of the Governor who on investigation was perfectly satisfied with the truth of the story and sent the innocent man home to me after he had served some six years in prison. We found for him a good position and he became a trusted and well-paid employee. In the first years of his freedom he was able to lay by money with which he later bought a farm. He was married to an estimable young woman and is now living a thoroughly honorable life.

These instances are cited, not with the idea of proving that injustice has been done, but merely to show that to look with horror and wholesale condemnation at this great prison family is unfair and that one may find much good metal worthy of redemption, even from the standpoint of those who despair of the man who has sinned and fallen.

In contrast to some quoted comes the story of a young man who was welcomed to the same Home in Illinois after a term in Joliet. He sat rather silent at the dinner table where the

newcomers had gathered around the white cloth covered with its pretty table ware and substantial fare. His companions thought he was dispirited and afterwards finding him alone in a corner of one of the parlors, one of the older inmates of the Home asked him what was the matter. "Had he had bad news?" "Oh no," he answered, "it is not that. It is this Home. Just think of the contrast! When I fell and was sent to prison I though I had forever made myself an outcast. For years I have sat in a cell, dressed in the stripes; I have drunk my coffee and water from a tin cup and eaten my food from a tin plate. When I sat down at that table to-night, I was reminded of home and of the past and I seemed to see the possibility of some day regaining what I had lost." He was not a poor stray of the city streets but the son of a Christian home. His father was an Episcopal clergyman and his environment had been one of comfort and refinement until he had yielded to evil and started on a downward course.

One of those whose return to rectitude I watched with deep interest had been a professor of mathematics. Another came from a family with whom I came in touch through correspondence, and found them honorable members of one of the courts of Europe, and many represent homes in this country very far re-

moved from the ignorance and neglect of the slums.

It should also be remembered that there is in many of our prisons a large foreign element of the illiterate, ignorant and helpless who have drifted to our country and easily joined the ranks of the lawless if indeed they have not belonged to them in their own native land. Some of these however are in prison more through ignorance than criminal intent.

When we come to inquire into the cause of imprisonment, we are constantly impressed with one fact, which cannot be denied, that the curse of drunkenness has proved directly or indirectly the ruin of between eighty and ninety per cent. of all those in prison. Many a blow has been struck, many a deed committed, many a robbery perpetrated by those so under the influence of this evil spirit that when they have come to their senses in the prison cell they have asked, "Where am I, what have I done?" and have literally had no memory of the deed that brought them there. It would not of course be in accordance with common sense or justice to say that they were therefore not guilty. They are guilty; they do deserve punishment but have we not the right to believe that, if delivered from this evil habit, they might be found to be trustworthy and true-hearted men?

My experience gained by close contact with the men in our prisons during the last seven years has convinced me that but a small percentage of the eighty-four thousand now within the walls should be called criminals at heart. In this statement I have been endorsed by wardens who have had a far longer and more intimate experience and who can speak from the standpoint of those whose duty it is to watch very closely the actions, character and tendencies of the men under their charge. This has to do with the manner of men in prison, the birth, position, etc., of those who form the prison population, but what of the hearts beneath the surface? No one could go into prison with hope of success who did not possess faith in the redemptibility of every soul, however far from the light it may have wandered. There is naturally, much to discourage. Many of the men are utterly hopeless about themselves; some are hard and bitter; others skeptical, liking to boast, as do crowds on the outside, of their indifference and carelessness. Yet for those who will be patient; who will look deeper, there are pearls beneath the turbulent waters; gold in the darkest corners of the mine and diamonds glittering amid the clay.

I believe that in every human heart however hardened or hopeless the exterior, there is some tender spot if one know rightly how to touch it;

some chord of sweetness that can be made to vibrate to the very harmony of heaven amid all the jangling discords of life; some little spark that by the breath of inspiration may be fanned into a flame and kindle the purifying fire. Amid these whom many would give up as beyond reach and unworthy of effort, I have found generosity, unselfishness, sympathy, patience and cheerfulness that would often teach people in happier circumstances a striking lesson. How greatly this adds to the hopefulness and courage of those who have gone forth into this field can readily be conceived. Many, many instances could I cite but I will quote one case of kindness which came under my personal observation. A young man was serving a twenty years' term in Sing Sing. The long sentence was nearing its close. Only a year more stood between him and liberty. The old mother over seventy years of age, who had stood by her boy all through these dreary years was very sick and reduced to direst poverty. Her husband had died and after years of hard toil she had reached the point where sickness and weakness made money earning impossible, and eviction was imminent. In this hour of distress she appealed to her boy for help. He was able to make a little money by over-time work. It was very little, only a cent and a half a day or five dollars in a whole year. He found on referring

to the Warden that he had already sent all that he possessed to his mother. The thought of her need and possible death from want drove him nearly to distraction and yet he felt himself utterly powerless to help her. In the same prison was another man also serving twenty years. He was an old timer, had served several terms before and this one was a sentence he would probably never have received had it not been for his past record. When he learned of his fellow-prisoner's anxiety, he took all his own earnings, twenty dollars which represented the hard toil of four years and sent them gladly to the old mother though it meant depriving himself of all the extra little comforts he might have purchased. Though for later chapters I reserve the after lives of my "boys" I must give the sequel of this story. Both men came home to us. They became earnest Christians and have good positions to-day where they have proved themselves absolutely worthy of our confidence. They are earning good wages, have won the confidence of their employers and the old mother has been well provided for.

## II

### "REMEMBER ME"

As a little child I spent many a happy season in the home of my dear aunt Miss Charlesworth, the authoress of "Ministering Children." The pretty tree-shaded garden of Nutfield Cottage was bordered on one side by the quiet village churchyard and a little private gate opened on the path that led through it to the garden of Nutfield Court, where our special playmates lived. By daylight one could run blithely enough between the old quaint head-stones, many of them moss-covered, while other mounds were bright with masses of blossom, when the breeze was playing in the trees, the lark was sending forth its carol of praise from the blue sky above or the quaint old ivy-covered tower of the church might send forth its glad peal of chimes. There was so much of life and beauty that children could run back and forth over the grassy path with no thought of the death that lay still and solemn beneath the smiling flowers and whispering grasses. But it was a different thing entirely, if one walked back after nightfall, with senses alert for every sound and heart beating fast with unknown terrors. The rustle of a bird in the ivy; the creaking of a dead

branch; the flitting of a bat's dark wing or the play of moonbeam and shadow were things that made the churchyard a place to be avoided for now the memory was vivid that this was the village of the dead. In those childish days death held for me a great horror. The thought connected with it, that which made me feel most desolate, was the fact that when one was dead, laid away deep in the earth and left alone in some dark place beneath the tree shadows; to be covered in by the snow, or swept over by howling winds or dismal rains, the world would still go on the same as ever. For others, bright home lights would gleam, laughter and fun, companionship and love, life with all it means would still exist, while the dead would lie forgotten and alone.

I have thought of these things and seen once more the vivid picture and felt the thrill of those childish fears as I have entered into sympathy with "the boys" in prison. Prison to many is a living death. They feel that they have dropped out of life. The rendering of the judge's sentence was the "dust to dust" of their burial service; the rhythm of the wheels that bore them away to prison sang the requiem of their despair and desolation, and when the heavy iron door clanged to behind them, it was like the falling of the sod upon their grave. Henceforth they were

not of the world. In it they were dead and forgotten and this bitterness was harder to bear when they remembered that outside amid the old scenes, the busy, happy rush of life would go on just as blithely despite their sorrow. For others the home light still gleamed; the sunshine, the joy, the love of life which was still dear to them was continuing in all its fullness but beyond their reach. Forgotten! There is more bitterness and tragedy in that one word than volumes could describe. It holds a record of broken hearts and embittered souls that blots the star of hope out of many a sky. "What a man sows he must reap. They deserved it for they have sinned, they have broken the law and it is only maudlin sentiment to pity and sympathize with them," is a sentiment I have often heard expressed. From the purely worldly point of view this may be so, among those who feel in no sense their brother's keeper, and believe that the one who has fallen has put himself forever without the pale of human sympathy. The whole question can be solved by merely quoting the old saying, "They have made their own bed, they must lie upon it." To Christians, however, this is impossible. No, I will say more. To any who have an interest in their fellow-men and a loyal love for their country, the grave responsibility towards this vast prison population must loom up

as a potential fact. Yet it has been a very much forgotten subject.

"Remember me!" From the long ago past this cry rings out to-day. How vividly we can call up the scene before us, when lips white and parched with death and anguish first spoke them in the labored breath that was hurrying a guilt-laden soul into the dark unknown hereafter. We hear also the answer spoken in like mortal agony by the martyred One at his side. With what light it must have come into his darkness as peace in the storm and very life to that dying one, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The Christ was perfectly aware of the past. There is no intimation in the story that the man was suffering wrongfully but the answer was not, "You've no one to blame but yourself;" "once a thief always a thief." The deed that had brought him to death, the sin that had ruined his life was forgiven, the soul that cried for help, that believed in the power of the dying Christ beside him was recognized by the world's Saviour. He was called and welcomed to go into the mystery of eternal life side by side with his Lord. That same cry goes up to-day from every cell in our dear Christian land, from those who represent to-day that outcast of Calvary, "Remember me!" To whom should it appeal more strongly than to the followers and representatives of that same

Christ, who would have His glad message of hope sent clearly and convincingly, echoing and re-echoing into every dark and lonely cell where it is so sorely needed. Has this been done? Do the Christian people and philanthropists of our land feel their responsibility to these men? Compare this corner of God's vineyard with many others and let us ask ourselves whether it has had its share of prominence in pulpit and press as a plea to efforts of Christian charity. I fear not, and yet in the scene of the last judgment as well as the one already quoted, we are reminded that this is one of the Christ's requirements of those, who would follow in His footsteps.

In response to those words, "Go ye into all the world," this country has spent its millions on foreign missions and sent forth thousands of consecrated men and women in willing exile. The Christ gathered little children into His arms and blessed them, and the Church following the divine example can show to-day its splendid Sunday-school work, children's hospitals, orphanages, nurseries, kindergartens and many other loving, saving missions to the little ones. He healed the sick, and His followers have poured out their wealth in these days to give hospitals to the poor, but He is also "in prison" and have we in like manner visited Him there? I write thus and I ask these questions because I have seen the great

need so vividly that I have been impelled to come back from the prison world to testify that the criminal problem is what it is to-day because it has been neglected. If the responsibility for those in prison was realized by the Christian world as clearly as it has realized the need of the heathen, the whole situation would in ten or twenty years be revolutionized. It has been an overlooked and in a great measure an untilled field. Repeatedly was I told when I contemplated making it my life mission, that my efforts would be useless, nothing lasting could be accomplished, and that these men were beyond hope, but it has always seemed to me that such an argument merely furnished a greater reason for determined effort. I would not have any misconstrue my statement and report me as saying that this work was wholly neglected until our work began. I speak in the wide sense and am comparing this field with other fields of Christian activity and in what I say, I believe all who have worked in prisons will agree with me. There have been of course some workers, loving, loyal souls who have toiled away unknown and unrecognized so far as the world is concerned, but they are the few whose devotion only emphasizes the fact that this field has been abandoned by the forces that should long since have conquered it. England in years gone by had her Elizabeth Fry

and John Howard. They did a lasting work, but should not their example have been followed by tens of thousands in that land? Her jails are still full of prisoners and one of her oldest wardens has declared with emphasis, after an experience of thirty-five years, that he has known only two cases of reformation in all that period. In this country I could name other devoted workers. I would not slight the consecrated toil of Chaplain Barnes who for twenty-eight years has striven with the devotion of a saint for the welfare of "the boys" in Massachusetts, or of Mrs. Courtland De Peyster Field who has for twenty years led a Bible class in Sing Sing. There have been earnest workers of the Society of Friends who have done valuable service in Pennsylvania, and in Iowa there are Sunday-school teachers who have had a record of over twenty years of teaching in the prison. But the call has been unheeded by the many who are equally responsible with the few who have heard and responded. From every pulpit, in every Sunday-school, through the pages of the religious press, the need of the heathen is constantly kept before the people and so impressed that the youngest child knows all about it. What do the children in our Sunday-schools or the congregations gathered in our churches know of the need behind prison walls? Where has any large offering ever been

taken for this cause? Who has ever thought of leaving a generous legacy for the redemption of these men? I do not for a moment grudge what has been given to missions. I merely want to bring to remembrance these others who have been overlooked, this occasion for help at our very door, a need which may be unlovely and have nothing about it of the glamour of romance which distance lends to a cause, but which all the same concerns human souls divinely loved and groping in great darkness.

Those who have entered it can report that here is a glorious opportunity. This field is indeed white to the harvest and there is no reason why mighty results should not be gathered where people have been inclined to look only for disappointment and failure.

In seeking for the cause of all this general indifference, I can only conclude that the fact that these men have been wrong-doers and are suffering in consequence, has robbed them of sympathy. If I were pleading for the abolition of prisons, the lightening of punishment or were making sentimental excuses for transgressors, I could understand that the appeal might awaken no interest, for it would appear to be a contradiction to justice. What we do advocate is the saving of these derelicts, that while in prison and on their discharge, help be given them in a

practical way so as to prevent their relapse into crime. From the purely worldly standpoint he who has sinned is unworthy of help and therefore is not an object of pity or sympathy. From the Christian side of the question he is more to be pitied and the more earnestly to be sought after. Did not the Good Shepherd say He would leave the ninety and nine to seek for the one straying sheep? Surely his need of mercy is far greater with the guilt of sin on his conscience, its haunting memory robbing him of confidence in himself or faith in efforts at reformation.

How much the attitude of the world towards the prisoner and its prevalent opinion have effected the men can hardly be imagined by an outsider. Hope, encouragement and confidence mean everything to any man in life's struggle. Take only as an illustration, the attitude of the doctor at the sick bed. He knows that his cheering words to the patient mean almost as much as his remedies, and were he to be forever reminding the sufferer of each unfavorable symptom and shaking his head disconsolately over the prognosis with an admission that it was little or no use to try and save him, the result would be a depression on the part of the patient which might even in many cases prove fatal. In just this way have the morally weak and sick been too often robbed of the hope and courage that

might have meant ambition and effort in the right and saving direction.

A learned writer some years since published in one of our scientific papers a treatise concerning criminals, in which he proved from his own mental conclusions that they could not be reformed. I did not read the paper but I saw it mentioned in reviews and deplored the fact that science should be prostituted to so demoralizing a use. On the following Christmas day I planned to spend my time visiting the cells in Sing Sing and talking individually to as many of the men as possible, for that is a day full of home memories and the realization of loneliness is even more keen and bitter than usual. To my surprise I was met at cell after cell with the question, "Have you read, Little Mother, what Professor ——— said about us?" and in some instances by educated and skeptical men, it was used as an argument against the duty of trying to do better. If those who toll the bell of doom for these poor souls in bondage, fully realized how the damning tones echo and reecho in disheartening vibration from prison to prison, from cell to cell, they might understand that it is almost criminal to break the bruised reed and quench the smoking flax. What should we think of the physician who should calmly and cold-bloodedly put out the spark of life in a pa-

tient where though his theories contradicted the likelihood of recovery, some other doctor might save life in the eleventh hour?

That there is a terrible influence in heredity, no one can deny. The drunkard or impure liver leaves the taint of evil appetite to be struggled against by the children to whom he gave life, but to use this as an argument against the possibility of reforming certain men is a contradiction of the teachings of Christ. His message of hope is to every man; His offer of strength and power to the most needy and unfortunate as well as to those in whom one would naturally look for godly aspirations. We have seen enough in our work to understand that many of those who have had the worst environment to contend with, and have been handicapped by miserable parentage have yet been able to accept and respond to the highest teaching, and have made a thorough success of earnest Christian living. I was visiting Sing Sing on one occasion when I had planned for a long list of interviews. As was my custom I presented the list to the Warden, who was deeply in sympathy with our work, and we went over it together that he might give me information that would prove useful in meeting the wants of different men. Coming to one name upon the list, he paused and asked me if I knew the man. I told him that I knew him

merely as one who had written me a few lines requesting an interview. "Well," he said, "I will tell you his reputation. We look upon him as the worst and most treacherous man in this prison. He is an habitual criminal, has probably been a criminal all his life, has had several terms in prison and has been constantly punished for insubordination. Three times he has stabbed officers and fellow-prisoners, he has been in plots to escape and twice attempted to burn down the prisons he was in. He has been a morphine or opium fiend, and now he is being kept in 'solitary' because he cannot be trusted with the other men." I shall never forget my interview with this man. It was towards evening of a very busy day for I had between sixty and seventy private interviews between the opening and closing of the prison day. I was sitting in the chapel close to one of the barred windows that looked over the Hudson. The sun was setting and the river gleamed like burnished gold while great shafts of glory were flung upwards from the hills tinting the clouds with crimson and amber. Looking back from the brilliant scene without I glanced down upon my papers scattered upon the little table at which I was seated. There I saw also the streaks of yellow light but between each sunbeam lay the heavy shadow of a bar. I sat there thinking how like

the lives of our "boys" was that contrast. In every life there was that heavy shadow blotting, discouraging, darkening the whole present and future, and then turning from the sad side, I thanked God that there was a sunlight that could force its way even into the darkest gloom of prison life, the sunshine of God's own love and mercy, His pardon and His presence. I suppose I had allowed myself to dream a little for I was startled when I heard a shuffling footstep near me. I had not noticed that the officer who stood outside the door had ushered in my next visitor. Looking up I saw a man who might have been taken as a very type of the hopeless habitual criminal. His walk, his attitude, the furtive, distrustful look in his eyes, the nervous twitching of hand and lip and muscles told of one who had been hunted and caged. As he stood there with his dark eyes fixed searchingly on my face I saw how completely he had become a nervous wreck and how he had lost his faith not only in himself but in mankind. I rose to say a few words of welcome, drew up his chair near the table and yet he said never a word. I noticed how the hand that he had laid on the table to steady it shook and how the poor face so white with prison pallor quivered with nervousness. I told him again how glad I was to see him and that he had done quite right in

sending for me but it was not until some moments later that he broke the silence and then with the abrupt question, "Do you know who I am?" I was going to give him his name as I knew it, but before I could speak he leaned forward and in the bitterest accents said, "I will tell you. I am the worst and most treacherous man in this prison." Then followed in short, concise words, the story of the efforts to escape, the insubordination, the attempts at incendiary outrage. Pointing to the chains that hung upon the pillar in the chapel, he said, "I have been chained up there. I have been put in the dark cells. I have been punished over and over again but it has not any of it done me any good. Would you like to know what the magistrate who last sentenced me said about me? He said after passing sentence, 'Take him away and lock him up like a brute beast for that is all he is.'" Then with indescribable pathos he turned and said, "Do you think there is any hope for me?" I was at once upon ground where I could speak without hesitation, and I told him simply that if he was through with an evil life, if he was tired of wrong-doing and was thoroughly determined to do right there was a love that could forgive him and a power that could help and keep him in the future. When at last we knelt together, there in the glory of the setting sun, I prayed that the

dear Lord, who could bring light into our darkness, might dispel the thick clouds that had shut in this soul from hope, and bring to him the revelation that would change his life. There were tears in the dark eyes as we parted, and taking my hand in his he said, "I *will* try, Little Mother." He did try, and more than that he triumphed. At first it was a stern battle of an awakened will and conscience fighting against desperate odds. The feeling that a friend was watching and waiting anxiously for good reports proved undoubtedly an incentive. Just about this time I was taken dangerously ill and had to go to the hospital. The news was received with the deepest concern within the prison walls and many men who had never prayed in their lives were found on their knees night after night asking God to spare my life. A letter from this "boy" reached my secretary in which he said, "I am trying very hard to be good these days because it says that the prayers of the righteous avail much and I do want my prayers to help in making the Little Mother well." It was not the highest motive for being good but it was the best that had thus far ever inspired this life and it proved the stepping-stone to better things. It was not long before he sought and found Christ as his Saviour and became an earnest Christian. When he left the prison I do not believe there

was an officer who thought it would be possible for him ever to make an honest living. That was over five years ago. He is to-day a prosperous and happy man. He has become by hard work and faithfulness assistant-superintendent in a large industry in which he is employed. He has a comfortably furnished and happy home, and is so changed in face and personal appearance that I do not believe any of his old companions could recognize him. Some three years ago a detective, who had several times arrested him, talked with him sometime without for a moment suspecting it was the same man. So truly when the heart is transformed do the face and manner reflect the change. I quote from his last letter to me written after our seventh anniversary gathering:

"My dear Little Mother: I write to let you know I enjoyed the seventh anniversary celebration very much. How soon a man forgets the years of misery in the days of happiness. My wife was quite disappointed when I told her of the mistake I had made in leaving her in New York. How pleased she would have been to have met you on such a great occasion. The 'boys' and their families all seemed so happy and indeed it was a sight worth seeing. I have a deep feeling in my heart for Hope Hall 'boys' and have often taken one into my home for a

few days while he was out of work. Some day I am going to own my own home and realize what has been my day-dream. Do you remember that it was your confidence in telling the public that you would give them 'flesh and blood facts' that made me resolve to be one of the 'facts.' Well, I have fought the fight and I have had a hard, even cruelly bitter struggle for the first two years. How much sweeter is the victory! I would not have it different. God has been very good to us and we can see His hand in the working of our prosperity. When I think of those two years, the struggles and trials, the hungry days and sleepless nights, it only gives me and mine more zest in the enjoyment of the God-given prosperity we have now. 'All things work together for good.' You know I had to learn a trade since I left prison and that it was B—— G—— (one of our 'boys' who had been a notorious burglar but has made a success of an honest life) who taught me the fundamental principles of this trade, at which I am now earning a living that only good mechanics can enjoy. Indeed no man can prosper unless he hustles and pushes himself ahead, for business people these days are carrying no dead wood on their pay rolls. Thank you for the very happy day, etc."

In this case there was certainly nothing in the

past to bring in a hopeful aspect. His environment had been of the worst, so had been his parentage and rearing. From childhood his feet had been trained to tread in the wrong path and, as he once said to my dear co-worker, Mrs. E. A. McAlpin, he did not believe in heaven or hell, God or the devil.

Those who have been looked upon by all as the most hopeless are the old timers in State Prison. Speaking one day in a court-room in New York on behalf of a man to whom I wanted the Judge to give a chance and the benefit of doubt in his case, I was told most definitely by that gentleman that there was absolutely no hope for a man who had been more than once in State Prison. He said, "Mrs. Booth, you may have some success with the first offenders, but you can do nothing whatever with those who have been in prison again and again. They are criminals born and there is nothing to do for them but to rearrest them and put them out of harm's way." This discouraging verdict I have heard from the lips of many prison officers, police officers and authorities on criminal questions and so has it been impressed upon the men that they have repeatedly assured me that I was wasting my time upon them. Can anything be imagined more utterly contradictory to the teaching concerning the Almighty power of divine grace?

Above all should these be remembered and the greatest hope and most earnest effort be put forth by those who would take hope to the prisoner.

## III

### THE VOLUNTEER PRISON LEAGUE

How small a thing may sometimes all unforeseen lead to momentous results! How often a little turn of the tide which some of us call chance and others Providence, opens up to us new channels that carry us into unexpected futures! It was a letter from some of the prisoners in San Quentin, California, asking me to visit them during my stay in San Francisco that first led my steps over the threshold of a state prison. That day left a deep impression on my heart, and what I had seen made me long for an opportunity practically to help the prisoner.

Never shall I forget the sea of upturned faces, many of them so plainly bearing the marring imprint of sorrow and sin—despair and misery,—yet behind the scars and shadows there was such an eager longing,—such a hungry appeal for a sight of the gleam of Hope's bright star, that one could but feel an intense inspiration while delivering the message. Never before had I seen the stripes,—never heard the clang behind me of the iron gates, nor had I realized the hopelessness that enshrouds the prisoner. It seemed almost

an impertinence for me, coming as I did from a happy sunlit world, from freedom, friends and home, to undertake to preach to these into whose lives I had only just entered and whose thought and feeling I could so poorly interpret. Is it a wonder that tears rose more readily to my eyes than words to my lips, and that it was hard for me to control either thoughts or voice? I did not attempt to preach. Undoubtedly their consciences in many a dark lonely hour had preached far more pointedly than I could. As far as possible I tried in that brief hour to carry them away from prison. I felt it would help them if I could make them forget where they were, whereas the emphasizing of their position and condition might only prove embittering. Stories I had gathered from the great fragrant book of nature, or that had come to me from baby lips, I realized would touch their hearts more swiftly than the most forcible arguments or convincing condemnations. The response I read in those upturned faces—the grateful words that reached me afterwards through the mail and the constant memory of that scene as I witnessed it lasted with me deepening into a determination to make their cause mine when the opportunity should offer.

At that time my husband and I were leaders of the movement known as the Salvation Army.

It would have been impossible to start prison

work under the hampering influence of regulations which governed that movement from a foreign land. When our connection with the Salvation Army was finally severed, we found ourselves free to enter new fields.

I wish to make it very clear, as many are often misled, *that our movement has nothing to do with the Salvation Army, is in no way connected with it, and is absolutely dissimilar in method and government.* This distinction I venture to emphasize in order to avoid a confusion that has frequently occurred in the past.

I wish to go no further into this subject save to say, that when we severed our connection with the Salvation Army, it was not the action of impulse or of disagreement with individuals, but from conscientious principles and after much anxious thought and earnest prayer. It was not easy to begin over again and build up a new movement. Starting in two small rooms in the Bible House, with half-a-dozen workers to help us, and absolutely no capital or source of income for the work that opened out before us, the Volunteers had many difficulties to face.

We knew that God's hand was with us, and now, looking back over the history of the movement during the seven years of its existence, we have, indeed, much to be thankful for.

Many have come to feel that one of God's pur-

poses in those leadings that often seem so strange to us was that this new work in the prisons might be undertaken.

Though this is but one branch of the work of the Volunteers of America, which has of course many other fields in which much blessed success has been obtained, yet it is the one which fills perhaps the most needed gap in the defenses of Christ's Kingdom.

When we designed the new standard of the movement we placed in the centre of a white field as our emblem the star of hope. I prayed then that it might in time be known and loved in every prison of our land. Though I longed from the first to undertake this special work for our country's prisoners, I did not wish to open the way myself, for with my whole heart I believe most strongly in Divine guidance and I wished to be very sure that this was God's work for me.

The Volunteers had only been organized a few weeks when a letter came from the warden of Sing Sing asking me to speak there. Another small thing, but it put into my hands the key to the future and came unsolicited. I felt that it was God's answer to my earnest prayer that the door might be opened. On the 24th of May, 1896, the initial meeting was held, and from that place and hour it has grown and widened, until now the movement has attained national propor-

tions. From Sing Sing the call came to prison after prison. Sometimes it was a plea sent from the boys by the chaplain with his request for a visit added in earnest words. Sometimes it came from a warden who had heard the testimony of other wardens as to what had been accomplished in their prisons. The work was opened in the following State Prisons—Sing Sing—Auburn and Clinton in New York State—Charlestown, Mass., —Trenton, New Jersey—San Quentin and Folsom, California—Joliet, Illinois—Columbus, Ohio —Fort Leavenworth, Kansas—Canon City, Colorado—Anamosa, Iowa, and Baltimore, Maryland.

The initial meetings have been held also in Lansing, Kansas—Jackson, Michigan—Fort Madison, Iowa—Weathersfield, Connecticut—Fort William—Governor's Island, New York. Yet there are many, many other prisons from which most earnest invitations have come to us, which at present to our great regret have to be denied for lack of time. Were my shoulders free from the growing financial burden which has naturally increased with the development of the work, I could spend infinitely more time with these who need me so much and could double the good already accomplished. It is a wide country and the breadth of the field and urgency of the need often make we wish I could be in twenty places at once.

In New York State I owe much to the loving and able assistance of my dear friend, Mrs. E. A. McAlpin. She has won a very warm place in the hearts of the "boys" and constantly leads my League meetings for me—spending hours over interviews with the "boys" in the prisons of New York. I have around me a devoted little band of workers who help me in the outside work, and yet we all feel this longing for more time, more means, more strength to fill the great opportunity that has opened before us. We realize only too keenly that this is but the small beginning of a great work. Already we are in touch with some twenty-four thousand men within the walls, and with a growing number who are now in the hard struggle to honorably maintain their regained freedom.

We did not commence the enterprise with any preconceived ideas, plans or hobbies of our own to work out. We believed that to be successful the work must be of natural growth, developing with circumstances. To plan your methods out in study or committee room and then to try to bend the circumstances to your well laid track, will almost invariably mean failure. All the plans and measures of the present organization have been worked out in prison, and that which I know of the problems I have learned from the "boys" themselves.

From the very first I realized that to make the work effectual there must be the establishment of personal friendship, and that it was only as we recognized and helped the individual that we could by degrees affect the whole population. They needed friendship and the touch of human sympathy far more than preachment or argument. To thus help them practically we had of course to know the men that we might enter as much as possible into their lives, so that we could meet them on a more intimate footing than that of lecturer and audience—preacher and congregation. The only way in which one can really understand a man's life is to meet him on the level. We commenced with the chapel services, talking to the men collectively in a strain that would make them feel and realize the faith and hope we felt for them. Then I expressed my willingness to correspond with all those who had no friends to write to. The many letters which reached me as a consequence soon gave us an insight into the thoughts and feelings of the men and we were then able to become familiar with the names and histories of many of them. After this we could follow up our correspondence with personal interviews. It was wonderful how the hearts of the men were touched and opened to us. In no field have I found a quicker and deeper response to the message delivered, and

there has certainly been time now to prove that it was not a mere passing emotion or revival enthusiasm, but that a deep and lasting work was being accomplished.

As men began to take the decisive step and declared their intention to lead a different life it became evident that organization would be wise to band them together and to enable them to show their colors in a way that would strengthen and safeguard them, helping them to be a constant example to others. To meet this need we started the V. P. L. or VOLUNTEER PRISON LEAGUE. It is a very simple banding together in each prison of those who stand for right living and good discipline. Each member has a certificate of membership which reads as follows:

"This is to certify that ———— is a member of the Volunteer Prison League having faithfully promised with God's help to conform to the following conditions of membership:

First—to pray every morning and night.

Second—to read the Day Book faithfully.

Third—to refrain from the use of bad language.

Fourth—to be faithful in the observance of prison rules and discipline so as to become an example of good conduct.

Fifth—to earnestly seek to cheer and encourage others in well-doing and right living, trying

where it is possible to make new members of the League."

This document is hung in the prison cell and as the man pins on his coat the badge of the order, a small white button with the blue star in its centre and the motto of our League in red lettering—"Look up and Hope"—he becomes at once a marked man. He is watched by officers and men alike and that very fact is in itself a reminder to him in the hour of temptation of the obligations he has taken upon himself. When the League has attained some size it becomes a post and the white standard is presented. Their loving loyalty to the flag is very clearly seen among the men by the way in which they earnestly try to live up to the principles it represents. Often in my letters I read such sentiments as this—"Little Mother, as I entered the chapel Sunday and looked at our white flag, I thought again of the promises I had made, of all they ought to mean, and I promised God that with His help I would never disgrace it. No one shall see anything in my life that could bring dishonor or stain to its whiteness."

Naturally there is quite a bond of union among these League men and it exists not between those in the one prison alone, but is a link of prayer and fellowship, and sometimes almost produces healthy rivalry between prison and

prison as each Post wishes to keep the best record. The thought that has made this League a strong foundation for the work and that has proved the most rousing inspiration to the men is that the work is not ours but theirs. No philanthropist, preacher or teacher in the world can reform these men. An influence from without may prove very helpful but it is from within that the true reform movement must start. The whole key of this great question, the real solution of the problem lies within the prisons. It rests with the men themselves. We can bring them hope, can help them with our sympathy, can stimulate their ambition and effort, but they must "work out their own salvation." In the League they are made to realize this very keenly; the responsibility is rolled back upon their own shoulders. They cease to think that people must pick them out from their difficulties or that some turn of fortune's wheel must come to place them in happier circumstances, before they can become truly honest and upright. They realize that they must fight their own battle,—commence to rebuild their character, wresting from adverse circumstances every good lesson and using every chance they can gain to raise themselves from the pit into which they have fallen. Of course we lay the greatest stress on the need of Divine help. We know from re-

peated experiences that the "boys" must be transformed in heart and nature by the spirit of God if they are to be truly successful, but we believe that God helps the man whom He sees willing and anxious to help himself. Nowhere in the Bible do we find that people can drift lazily into the kingdom of heaven. Christian life must be an earnest warfare of watchful struggle in which every faculty of the man is sincerely engaged. Since the starting of the League we have enrolled nearly fourteen thousand men within prison walls. We have found their interest in the work intense, and as news of it has spread from prison to prison even before our coming to them, the "boys" have learned to look upon it as their special work and have longingly waited to welcome that which they have come to feel will mean the dawning of a new hope for the future. To try and convey to you something of this feeling of possession on the part of the men that have prepared our way in prison after prison, I turn back to an old diary of mine and quote from its pages the notes on the opening of our work at Dannemora—November 22d, 1896.

"It was a dark, windy night, heavy snow clouds had gathered and dark shadows lay around the prison wall. Long rows of electric lights gleamed steadily through the gloom and the absolute stillness was unbroken. Right

there by my window I knelt and prayed for the many we should soon see and learn to know; prayed that the 22d of November might be as memorable a day as the 24th of May, the 27th of September, the 17th of October and other red letter days in prison which I might mention.

All through that night the snow fell and Dannemora presented a pretty winter scene when we looked out of our windows Sunday morning. Clouds were still in the sky, but streaks of silver light and pale primrose tints behind the mountain range and patches of blue here and there showed that fair weather was triumphing. The icicles hung in long, glittering fringes from the roofs of the prison buildings and the crust of the snow in the prison yard gleamed with frost brilliants. As the hour of service approached we entered the prison and waited in the warden's office until the word came that all was ready.

How can I describe what followed and the sight that greeted me? Loving hands had for four weeks been decorating the chapel. Two thousand yards of evergreen trimming was wreathed and festooned on pillars and walls. Flags, shields, mottoes had been beautifully draped and designed and the blending of the national colors with the Volunteer standard was graceful and effective. Over the door through

which I entered was the word "welcome" surmounted by an eagle on a drapery of the two flags. As we passed up the aisle escorted by the warden, the chapel was packed, all the "boys" being present, save those who had charge of the boilers, and the men in the condemned cells.

The audience was very still as I entered, but the moment I mounted the flower-decked platform they burst into an enthusiastic welcome. What a sight it was, that great sea of eager faces, amid the setting of colors and greenery! I wish I could give you a picture of the chapel as I saw it, but you must paint it in your own mind and when I tell you it was the most beautifully decorated building I have been in, you can realize how much loving thought and toil it represented. Is it a wonder my heart was deeply touched? Who was I, to receive such marks of love and honor? A stranger to all but three in that community, and yet they opened their hearts to me as their friend, even before they had heard my voice. I think they had learned already that I loved them, that I believed in a future of hope for them and that God had formed a bond of understanding and sympathy between us.

I cannot describe the meeting. The band played superbly, the singing was hearty, the interest and enthusiasm were intense, and to me the

faces of my audience with their ever changing expressions were a perfect inspiration. Then came the solemn closing minutes. Tears had flowed freely, hearts had been moved by the influence of God's own Spirit and now a hush seemed to fall and one could feel and see the struggle going on in many hearts.

Clearly and definitely understanding all that it meant, one after another arose. It was all I could do to control my feelings. The chaplain was in tears: many of the officers were weeping, and, with bowed heads, men were rising all over the place, until eighty-seven stood in God's presence, seeking the light and cleansing and liberty that He alone can give.

God was there. We could feel His presence, and the light came down and shone on some of those tear stained faces until they were almost transfigured.

When all was over, they had gone back to their cells, and I stood at the window of my room looking out at the snow, over which now the sun shone, my heart was very thankful, and the words seem to come to my mind with new force "though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow"; and looking up at the sky, where the sun had triumphed and chased away the clouds, the blessed promise "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a

cloud thy sins," came to my heart with a fresh wave of comfort.

The afternoon was a busy one with interviews, and in the evening I was again fully occupied. What a glorious night that was! The brilliant moon smiled down upon the snow-clad country making it glitter with a myriad frost diamonds. As we looked out upon the prison buildings from our windows, it was a very different scene from the night before. Everything looked so bright, so pure, so peaceful. The dark shadows, the heavy clouds, the fitful wind had given place to calm and silver light. So I think in some of the hearts that were that night speaking to God within those prison walls peace and light had triumphed, and the shadows and gloom had fled away. I sometimes wonder if my friends realize that I am thinking of them. I wonder if they know how near I am to them in heart and thought all the time I am at the prison.

I had intended to leave early Monday morning, but the warden persuaded me to remain over and take the night train. The whole day was spent in interviews, which kept me right up to the moment the carriage was at the door and I had to tear myself away. This enabled me to have a little personal talk with seventy-six men.

I was very much touched by a mark of appreciation of our work shown by a number of the

men who subscribed nearly one hundred dollars out of the money they had on deposit towards our Hope Hall fund. Does not this show how truly they appreciate our plans and schemes and efforts for their future? I think this should make the fortunate and wealthy outside the prison eager to follow their example in generous and loving sympathy with the good work. The officers of the prison among themselves subscribed fifty-five dollars as a testimony of their indorsement of the movement.

From men all over the country, in prisons not yet visited, comes the plea to go to them and my heart longs to answer it, but so far we have had to go slowly.

I was visiting recently for the first time a new prison, and was much touched by a remark made by one of the men to the chaplain. He is serving a life term and has proved himself to be an earnest Christian. Meeting the chaplain the day before my expected visit he said, "Chaplain, when there is some special request I have made in prayer, I write it down and when the answer comes, I put O. K. against the prayer. To-day I can do that again, for I have prayed so long that the Little Mother might come to us, and at last my prayer is answered." Is it a wonder that my heart turns longingly to the great wide field where the harvest awaits us, to the many whose call to

us is as clear as ever the Macedonian call could be from heathen lands?

Alas, all too much of my time has to be filled with money-raising lectures, so that long lecture-trips for this purpose keep me from the work where I know I could do so much to cheer and comfort these waiting hearts.

We do not want our labors in the prisons to be a mere evangelizing effort, but we wish to establish a permanent work, and hence of course we have had to move slowly. On the other hand the effect has been much more lasting. How much it has meant of cheer and sunshine to the men, can only be realized as we gather from day to day the news that comes to us from all over the country. It must be remembered how shut off these men are from friendship, from the world, from all matters of interest that can carry them out of their dull, dreary routine in cell and work-shop life, to understand what this link with the outer world has proved to many of them. We send to each prison a large number of *Volunteers' Gazettes*, the official organ of our movement and its pages are read with deepest interest giving, as they do, news of progress of each prison League, and also constant reports of the successes of men once their fellow-prisoners, who are now living free and honest lives in the path that lies before them also. They look forward intensely to their

League meetings. The whole tendency of the work is to stir up a new interest in life.

When one thinks of the men who are incarcerated for a lifetime, many of whom have perhaps outlived all ties of friendship and relationship, one can gain some idea of the help it proves to them in enduring their position, to realize that they belong to something and some one, and can still look for bright spots in the monotony of prison life.

The question may be raised as to the relationship of this work to the labors of the chaplains in state prison. I want it most emphatically understood that in all things our wish is to work harmoniously with prison officers, not only with the spiritual advisers, but also the wardens, and so far we have had the greatest help and sympathy from them. Our work could not be construed into a reflection on that of the chaplain. It is to help and to back up his efforts, to bring in an outside influence which I have found the chaplain most ready to welcome, a link to the outside world. The chaplain is of necessity of the prison world and though he has a splendid sphere for helping and blessing the men while under his charge, he cannot go with them into the new life. We may come in and form a friendship and tie to which they can turn after the chaplain has bidden them farewell, and they

are once more facing life's battle on the outside. In almost all the prisons where the V. P. L. has been established, the chaplains have most cordially welcomed us and are working heart and hand with us, some of them even wearing the little League button and becoming officially associated with the movement.

Chaplain Barnes of Massachusetts has an experience of twenty-three years of devoted toil for the "boys" and he has often told me he feels that a new era has come to the spiritual life of our prisons through the establishing of the V. P. L. It has been wonderfully interesting to us to watch the spiritual growth in grace, and the mental and moral development of the men after they have started in the new life. Often the most unlikely have seemed suddenly to wake up and develop possibilities never dreamed of by those who had known them before. As letter after letter has come to me from such I have felt as if I could read here the unfolding of a better nature long dormant, between the lines so simply and naturally telling of struggles and victories in the passing days. I have seen over and over the birth and growth of a soul.

Just recently a little Day Book came into my hands by chance, and knowing what I do of the owner, its record is a very pathetic glimpse into a heart story. He was by no means a first

offender but an inmate of the prison of the old timers, Dannemora. Burglary had been his special line and he had started in it quite young, as did his brother whose story I shall tell elsewhere. My first acquaintance with him was an urgent letter entreating me to care for his wife and little one, who, he feared from news just received, were facing dire need. My interest in them evidently touched a tender chord in his heart for he became one of my warm friends and champions, though at that time neither a Christian nor a League member. Many of the men who make no profession of being good are still most heartily with us in sentiment, and I have been looked upon as the "Little Mother" and stood up for as loyally by these as by our own V. P. L. "boys." As time went on and this man came more and more under the influence of the work, he began to weigh well his future and at last took his stand with good determination for the new life. When he joined the League I gave him this little book which all our boys are supposed to read together each morning and night. Five years afterwards it came into my hands by accident and I read what he had written on the fly leaf the day he had received it. "In accepting this little book I do so with a firm determination and a promise to try and live faithfully a better and purer life with God's help." Under-

neath his name and number are signed, and then the words "seven years and six months" chronicled the length of his sentence. Turning the leaves I found one verse marked that had evidently proved his greatest comfort, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." Then came the record of the passing days and years, marked off at the head of different daily portions blending the interests near and dear to his heart and future, with his daily devotion. "I am twenty-nine years old to-day," headed July 21st. On July 27th, "My wife is twenty-three years old to-day," and yet later on the same page three years after he chronicled, "My wife is twenty-six." In the shadow of that cell the baby face with golden curls came often to smile upon him in fancy and on one page we find "My little girl is two years old, 1897." In prison the days pass all too slowly. We find on another page May 2d, "Eight hundred and fourteen days more." Further on "Five hundred and seventy-two days more," then "three hundred and sixty-five days more" and yet again "two hundred and seventy" is marked and then the last entry "I go home to-day, July 27, 1901." So the Day Book, his little companion and guide, held on its pages the

record of the passing days in which he was preparing for the future. I knew something of the fierce struggle he had with old habits, evil temper, past memories and disappointments that had to be faced, for during those prison days I sometimes talked with him personally, but I also know how he conquered and how truly he came out "a new man in Christ Jesus." He thought he was coming to a glad, bright, joyous experience on his discharge and was met by a blow and sorrow that would have staggered many a stronger man. I cannot chronicle the awful test through which this soul passed, for there are confidences that cannot be betrayed even to show the keeping grace of the new life, but I can say this, he manfully stood the trial and is to-day a happy, earnest, honest, Christian man. He has proved himself a good husband and a most tenderly devoted father. He works hard all day, receiving excellent wages and in the evening walks or reads with his little girl. He has a bright, well furnished home and over a thousand dollars in the bank laid by for a rainy day. He has never returned to the saloon or in any way mixed with the old life which he considers buried with the dead self, for truly he is living in a new world after a veritable resurrection.

The little Day Book has proved a great com-

fort to many. At first we used to send a copy to every League member, though now regretfully we have had to desist, because we could not afford it with the great increase in membership. Many of our "boys" had never taken any interest in the Bible before and some are as indifferent and ignorant as the heathen abroad, but this "Daily Light" collection of passages has been to them a veritable revelation. Many feel towards it as one "boy" wrote to me, "As I kneel down to pray and read before going to the workshop in the morning it seems as if my Saviour sent me a direct message to guide and warn me through the trials of the day, and at night when I come in tired and read again, I find a message of comfort and a promise from Him that cheers and encourages my heart." The writer of these words died in prison a triumphantly happy death, leaving behind him a record, the truth of which every officer could attest, of earnest Christian living after having at one time been the terror of the prison, for from childhood he had been absolutely ignorant of the first rudiments of goodness and Christianity.

The following verses were sent by one of our League members and were penned in a prison cell. They give an insight into the thought and feeling of many another man who cannot perhaps as readily express himself in verse.

"Alone in my cell, where no eye can behold,
Nor ear drink in what I say,
I kneel by my cot, on the stones hard and cold,
And earnestly, tearfully pray.

"O, Jesus, dear Saviour, blot out from Thy scroll,
Each record there penned against me,
In mercy forgive me and ransom my soul,
O, fit and prepare it for Thee!

"I've wandered from Thee and forgotten Thy care,
Thy love trampled under my feet;
The songs of my boyhood, the altar of prayer,
Are only a memory sweet.

"Strange spirits oft come in the night to my cell
And moisten my cheek with their tears;
A message they bring and a story they tell,
That I had forgotten for years.

"They tell of a mother bowed down with despair,
Bereft of her pride and her joy,
Who morning and evening is breathing this prayer,
'Dear Jesus, restore me my boy!'

"O, Father, dear Father! in heaven forgive,
My weakness, my sin and my shame,
O, wash me and cleanse me and teach me to live,
To honor Thy cause and Thy name!"

If the record of successful work in prison were written only in numerical report one might still have many misgivings as to its success. There is only one thing that really tells in Christian work either in prison or on the outside and that is *the life*. Theory can be questioned, argument

can be refuted, profession doubted, creed quibbled over, but a life that can be seen and read of all men is testimony beyond criticism.

I remember after we had been working in Sing Sing six months an officer called me on one side and speaking very earnestly of the work, he said, "I want to confess to you that I was one who took no stock in this movement at first. I used to laugh at the men making a profession of living any better. I looked upon it as so much religious nonsense, but I confess I have been forced to change my views. You do not know the change it has made in this prison and the miracles that have been wrought in many of these men. You can see them in the meetings and can judge of them by their letters, but we live with them day after day and know far more than you can. I never believed anything could take hold of the whole prison population, the educated, the middle class and the tougher element affecting them equally as this work has done." Then he added, "There was one 'boy' in my company who was the foulest-mouthed man I have ever met. He used an oath with almost every word and was so criminal and evil that we never dreamed he could be anything else. The absolute reformation in that man is what opened my eyes. That was not talk but reality."

Perhaps the strongest testimony we could offer

as to the effect of the work on prison discipline, comes from the pens of our well-known wardens. Speaking before the quarterly meeting of the Iowa State Board of Control, Major McClaughry, late of Joliet, Ill., now Warden of the Federal Prison at Fort Leavenworth, said :

" I wish to add a word in relation to influences in the prison that I have found most helpful. Some years ago, Mrs. Booth came to the prison to speak to the prisoners. She first had interviews with some of the men which I permitted rather reluctantly, but I soon noticed her wonderful personal influence over the men she talked with. When later she spoke to the prisoners in chapel, and they were greatly interested in her presentation without cant or denominational prejudice, of the best way to live. I asked her to come again and she came. That time she organized with us what is known as the ' Volunteer Prison League,' an association of men, who, realizing what is before them band themselves together and wear the button of the League—which requires a great deal of bravery in a prison like Joliet. The promise to them was, that so long as they followed the motto of the League and looked upward and not down, forward and not back, and helped one another, they should be recognized as a force in the prison itself making for good order and constituted authority.

"I entered upon the experiment, as I say, with a good deal of apprehension, but I am glad to say that it proved to be one of the most potent forces inside of the prison to secure not only cheerful obedience and compliance with the rules and regulations of the prison, but a force that co-operated with the authorities of the prison in the direction of law and order. Wherever that League has been established, while it has gone up and down and had its vicissitudes, like the early church, it has proved most helpful in every respect, and its influence upon the individual men, no person not familiar with its workings can for a moment imagine. Therefore I feel that the Volunteer Prison League, properly managed, is one of the most beneficent institutions that can be introduced into prison life."

This testimony is all the more forceful when we remember that the one speaking has been a prison warden for some twenty-eight years and has also served as Chief of Police in Chicago. He certainly should know of what he speaks.

I opened the work in Dannemora, New York State, where Warden Thayer welcomed me most courteously, did all in his power both in his own home and in the prison, to make me feel at home, but being frank and outspoken he thought it well to impress me with the hopelessness of my task. He said briefly that no obstacle should

stand in my way as far as he was concerned, but he did not want to see me heart-broken over a work that he foresaw could never succeed. He told me clearly his opinion and advised me not to try the impossible. After watching the work, however, he became one of my stanch supporters and has repeatedly championed our cause where the usefulness of such work has been questioned.

At a public meeting in New York, he told a story on himself of which I was up to that time ignorant. Speaking of our first enrollment of men in prison, he said, "When I saw those men, one hundred and seven of them, stand up, I began to feel sorry for Mrs. Booth. Here were the very hardest men I had to deal with in the prison; men constantly reported for punishment. I took a list of their names for future reference. I kept that list in my desk, and when the year had passed I brought it out with a view of paralyzing that little woman. Would you credit it? I learned to my own surprise and satisfaction on comparing it with the punishment book that out of those who stood up in the chapel that Sunday morning, only three had required punishment during that entire year. I saw now what I had not realized before, namely, that as an aid to the observance of discipline of the prison no plans had ever equalled the influence of this work."

Warden Darby of Columbus, Ohio, writes:

"The organization of Post No. 10, Volunteer Prison League in the Ohio Penitentiary, has been very gratifying to the prisoners, who are looking forward to a brighter and better future, who are striving to build a moral foundation that will withstand the tides of adversity and trial. The League has been of incalculable benefit, for it has been directly instrumental in bringing many to right thinking, an absolutely necessary prelude to right doing.

"The good derived has not been limited to the League members alone, others have been induced to strive for better, higher and nobler lives. The influence of good will manifest its usefulness in any community and the rule is equally applicable on either side of the prison wall.

"The Volunteer Prison League is a factor in bettering the discipline of its members, since they who live up to the obligations must strive to improve their conduct, this being one of the primary objects of the organization."

Space does not allow the reproduction of the much that has been said and could be said of this work which, as I have tried to show, is not my work but the work of the "boys" themselves, the result of earnest conquering lives. Undoubtedly the lesson which men in prison need to learn almost above any other is that of *self-mastery*. Many are there through lack of self-con-

trol: others have utterly weakened will and deadened conscience by yielding themselves slaves to strong drink and yet others have let go their hold on the reins because, having once failed, they have allowed the feeling that it is no use to try again to rob them of courage. Just on this point their League membership has proved invaluable. If the new leaf is ever to be turned over, it should certainly be in prison. In the early days of our work many men would say to me as also to my dear friend and fellow-worker, Mrs. McAlpin, "No, I cannot take my stand now. It is too hard here, but I am determined to do right the day of my discharge." More and more the "boys" are coming to see how disastrous is such a fallacy. The man who does not have the courage in prison lacks it as much in freedom, when faced with the decision between right and wrong. There are, moreover, so many pitfalls and temptations awaiting him, to say nothing of the hard, up-hill road abounding in disappointments which almost all have to tread, that if he be not well prepared, failure is almost inevitable. Before he knows it, even with the best of intentions in his heart, such a man will be swept aside and carried away back to the whirlpool of vice and crime, from which he will all too quickly, be cast again on to the rocks of wreck and ruin.

In many ways I have heard of the influence of the League from unexpected sources. Travelling in a parlor car in the West on one occasion, I was introduced by some friends to a judge of the Supreme Court. In the conversation that followed, he told me he had heard of our work and was deeply interested in it. "There is one of your men," he said, "who has come under my personal notice and to whose great change of life I can myself testify. Some years ago I had to sentence him to State Prison. The man protested his innocence but there was no doubt in my mind as to his guilt. After he had become a member of your League in prison he wrote me a letter telling of his intention to lead an upright life in the future. He confessed his guilt and thanked me for the sentence which he now looked upon as the best thing that had befallen him. In due time he came out of prison, found work, has done well and won the confidence of those who knew him. Quite recently he wrote me saying that he had earned money enough to pay off his debts little by little, until all were discharged and so far as money could make restitution he had made it. Now he wanted to know the cost to the State for his prosecution that he might pay that also." This desire to make restitution and to undo past wrongs I have seen constantly, after the men's consciences had been

awakened, but in no other case have I heard of it going to the extent of wishing to repay the State and had I not heard this from the lips of the judge himself, I should have been inclined to think it an exaggeration.

Speaking in one of our Volunteer meetings a short time since a young man testified to the help the League had been to him in years gone by. He told our officers that he had been in prison for a forgery amounting to two thousand dollars; that on his discharge he had consulted me and I had advised him to promise the gentleman whom he had wronged that he would pay back the amount by degrees. He said further that he had just succeeded in doing this and was now a trusted employee of the very man who had had to prosecute him for crime.

This is not a place to lay bare confessions but I could give a wonderful story of the many confidences that have been given to me by hearts deeply enough touched and truly enough changed to become quick and sensitive regarding hidden wrongs that should be righted.

As I have looked over what has already been accomplished in state prison in its power on the future of these men and their relation to the world, I can but realize the safeguarding and benefit to others of that which tames and controls, changes and inspires men who might other-

wise go out into life hardened, imbittered and more depraved than on the day of their incarceration, to prey on society and wreak their vengeance for wrongs real or imaginary.

## IV

### THE POWER BEHIND THE WORK

In the bright fragrance of a spring morning our long, heavy train of cars wound its way slowly up the Divide. The track curved and doubled back and forth amid the forest like some great brown silver-streaked serpent; here gliding into the earth to be lost in the blackness of a tunnel, there, flinging itself over a dizzy chasm spanned only at fabulous cost by a feat of engineering. Higher, ever higher we rose until a glorious view of valley swept below us from the forest fringe to Ashland. At the summit came a pause for breath and then the long, dark, suffocating tunnel, and after it the sight that one would gladly cross a continent to see, as we beheld it in all the glory of brilliant sunshine and bluest ether. Below us stretched a great plain, a veritable green ocean of prairie. To one side the ridge of rugged forest-clad mountains that form the great Divide. Away ahead like high rocky islands in the emerald sea rose the dark steep Buttes backed by the spires and turreted peaks of the Castle Rocks.

But all this was only a setting for the jewel, the

less beautiful, above which towered in queenly majesty the glory of the Sierras, Shasta. As we first saw her, it seemed impossible to believe that the gleaming majestic mass of whiteness belonged to earth. She seemed to be a great white cloud on the horizon, shimmering against the pale-blue ether, resting but for a moment on the rock-bounded forest that swept from the plain to form her base. As we slowly wound our way down to the valley, as we glided in and out and round about over the plain, we gazed for hours at this most wonderful of mountains, our eyes fascinated, our lips silent, our hearts stirred by the wonder of her quiet, queenly grandeur. At first she dazzled us in the full glory of the sunlight as her snows shone against a vivid blue sky, then as the sun sank to the ridge opposite, the background changed to palest green and her whiteness was stained with crimson and touched with gold, growing richer and deeper every moment. Darkness began to gather in the valley; the woods grew mysterious with gloom; purple shadows crept up to the timber-line and even dared to steal over her snowy base, but the head of Shasta still glowed and blushed with the glory of the setting sun. At last he was lost to us over the ridge and the swift twilight claimed the whole land, but watching still the mountain heights above us, we saw

yet another change. Shasta was transfigured! The pale primrose of the after-glow shone over all her pure whiteness and from a queen of glory she seemed changed to the sweet loyalty of a loving heart that held the sacred memory of the beloved long after he was lost to other eyes.

Night found us creeping downwards in the solemn darkness of the chasm on the further side. Great fir trees, giant sentinels of the forest closed in about us and that strange, silent mystery of mountain solitudes reigned supreme. Looking backwards, we could still catch glimpses of the centre peak behind us, shining serenely white now beneath the silvery moonbeams, which had not strength to penetrate the dense forest that clothed the gorge. Leaning over the edge of the observation car, I had become so absorbed in communion with nature that it was startling to be aroused by a voice at my side. A fellow-passenger was calling my attention to something away down beneath us in the abyss which seemed to me to hold nothing but impenetrable blackness. As my eyes became used to the obscurity, however, I could distinguish a little silver line amid the rocks and though at first I could hear only the creaking of the trestle bridge beneath us and the labored breathing of our great locomotive, I distinguished at last the far-away silvery music of a tiny mountain

stream. It struck me as strange that I should have my attention called to this little brook when I had seen so many glorious streams and rivers in my overland journeys. The explanation however gave reason enough as my friend announced, "That is the Sacramento at its source. During the night we shall cross it twenty-seven or twenty-eight times and to-morrow you will see it very differently when we cross it for the last time."

All through that night I watched the growth of the little stream. At first it was narrow and shallow and its voice but a silvery song as it threaded its way amid the rocks or sent a spray of mist and foam over the moss when some obstruction barred its way. But by and by it grew to be a rushing torrent, the double note of power and purpose dominated its song, and as the train thundered over bridge after bridge, I saw it dashing and crashing over its rugged bed, here leaping a precipice, there rushing with wave-white fury against some mighty rock, tossing great logs from side to side as if they were straws. Ever onward, forward, downward, drawing with it every lesser stream, engulfing every waterfall and spring, it kept us company through the long, moonlit night and then in the broad daylight, we crossed it for the last time and saw it in the might of its accomplished strength. As the

great ferry-boat bore our heavy train over the river, I looked out upon a deep broad placid expanse of blue water. Sunbeams played with the myriad ripples powdering the turquoise with gold. Fertile foot hills rolled away on either side and looking far off to the horizon the mighty river joined the bay, and yet further lost itself through the Golden Gate in the mighty Western ocean. Broad enough, deep enough, strong enough to carry a nation's fleet upon its breast, that is what the streamlet of the wilderness had become. What mighty lessons Nature teaches us!

I have carried my readers far away to California and surely might be accused of wandering from my point, but I wanted to tell them of a voice that has been a blessed cheer and inspiration to my heart, reminding me in hours of difficulty and discouragement of the great Source of all strength and power. Had a critic paused in faithless speculation by the side of the little Sacramento in its rocky cradle days up there in the wilderness, he might have interrupted its silvery song with a jarring note of discouragement. "Foolish little stream," the critic might have said, "what are you singing about so joyously? Do you tell of the thirsty you are going to cool, of the wilderness that shall blossom at your touch, of the great valleys you are going to fertilize?

Are you dreaming of ships you would carry, of the long miles you would travel, of the great ocean upon whose breast you would cast yourself? How absurd and unlikely are these day dreams! Look at yourself! See how tiny and insignificant you are, so narrow that a child could leap over you, so shallow that I can see the very pebbles in your bed. It is a foolish fancy, impossible of realization. You had better stop singing, you will only dry up and be absorbed by the ferns and moss of the forest; that will be the easiest, happiest end for you." If the stream had thought it worth while to respond, I know the answer that would have rung out clear and sweet, for this is the message it sang to my heart, "Yes, of myself I may be small and insignificant. The distance and obstacles may be far and formidable. I may of myself be too weak to face them, but look behind me, at the snows of Shasta; think of the springs and water courses that gush from her eternal rocks and remember that my help comes from the hills and when thus helped, I too can become mighty."

In the early days of the work, it seemed an overwhelming undertaking to meet the great sad problem that faced us within the walls of State Prison. There was indeed a great desert representing thirst and need, wreck and ruin. Many tried to discourage us by painting in vivid colors,

the difficulties of the undertaking, and I grant they cannot be very easily exaggerated, for where vice and sin, human weakness and life's misfortunes have swept over mankind, the problem is one of the most overwhelming that can be faced. The work was spoken of as an experiment and a very doubtful one at that, and if it had been some new plan for the reforming of criminals, some mere exertion of human influence or the hobby and scheme of an organization that was to be tried, one might well have been faint-hearted. We, however, have felt from the first and now feel more intensely than ever that this undertaking has not been our work, but God's work. We can truly say we are not attempting it in our own strength but we "lift up our eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh our help," and to every doubter and critic we answer, "God does not experiment." His work succeeds; His building stands; His touch transforms. Were it not for this, what heart should we have in dealing with those who have made trial of other help and strength and found it to fail them?

Many of the men to whom we go are defiled with the leprosy of sin. They have tried self-purification, and effort after effort has failed them. What could we say to them unless we believed that the Voice that said of old, "Be thou clean," could say it as truly to-day? We deal with some

who are truly blind as to things spiritual, and no human hands could open these sightless eyes, no human voice could unstop the ears of the spiritually deaf. There we must deal with souls and consciences dead to right, unconscious of the responsibilities and possibilities of life, and we know that only the Divine Hand that raised the dead can quicken them again. We have realized and acknowledged this from the first, so our work is not to be a moral education or a recommendation tending to the turning over of a new leaf, but we have sought ever to point the souls in darkness to the true light and those wrestling with their own sin and weakness to the wondrous power of God.

Too often are we met when pleading with men to rise up and make a brave effort to do right, with the discouraging answer, "I have tried and failed," and each effort that proved fruitless has robbed them of the courage to try again. While we do not for a moment discount the vital importance of personal effort, of good resolves, of will exerted in the right direction, we try most clearly to show the need of seeking God's help, showing that when the man would start out on the road, it is of the utmost importance to *start right.* Feeling as we do, we have naturally been filled with hope and courage for our work. We do not have to look for difficulties, we need not

be overwhelmed by our own weakness or inefficiency; nothing is too hard for God. No obstacle can stand before Him. So from the first we have been full of faith and joy in battle and have not been disappointed for victory after victory has come to add inspiration to our efforts.

We believe that the great Father-heart feels intense pity and divine compassion for the one who has strayed and fallen. Surely no child of God can doubt this. It has seemed to us that the time has come when that passage of Scripture is being fulfilled, "For He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death." One can but be a believer in the miracles of old when faced with the miracles of to-day, where the fetters that have bound some souls have been snapped, and men have been delivered from the power of opium, of strong drink and other vices after they had been given up as utterly beyond redemption. During these years of work in prison, onlookers have acknowledged to me over and over again, that they have been forced to recognize some superhuman power when they have seen lives transformed. From watching at first with indifference or skeptical criticism, they have come at last to

look upon the work with absolute faith, even though personally they have had no knowledge of the wonderful power at work.

Let me give you in his own words the abbreviated sketch of the life of one of God's miracles:

"Everything looked fair for me as life lay all in front; money, education, social standing were mine. Loving parents and sweet surroundings beautified life, but alas they counted for nothing in one sense. Before I was twenty-one I flung all that was good to the winds, took my life into my own hands and decided to do as I pleased; I did so. Why, if there was any reason, it is immaterial now. Surely there should not have been. I left all who could help me and when twenty-two years of age found myself in a strange country, with all the tastes and ideas of one who had been gently raised, but without means to gratify them. To work I was not able, to beg I could not, so from being a lamb I gradually became a wolf. I realized that in order to succeed I must learn to keep cool, I must face life desperately. As I lived in the far West mostly, I had to acquire skill in the use of weapons and I was also an expert horseman. There was no other career open to me but the army. To my nature and character, there was no other safe place except prison. I did well while in the service, but the dissatisfaction in my

heart drove me often to excesses that gained a hold over me that constantly threw me down. Yielding to evil and despising myself for it, had the effect of hardening and embittering me; though I committed many lawless deeds, I generally managed to protect myself from consequences, never being caught for the worst things, and though I have known the inside of several prisons in the long years of my wanderings I have only served nine years, which, compared to what I might have had, seems small punishment. Once I escaped while in double irons and had it not been for that escape I might have died in the miserable suffering I was then enduring. I had to make a hundred miles on foot through desert country without food or water, and the third day I faced death having only just strength enough to reach the desired goal. I went through a term in one of the hardest prisons of this country years ago, when men suffered there indescribably and it was there that I took to opium, because I found it makes men forget and by its use you can still the anguish of remorse. A few years after that I served as Chief of Police in one of the districts of Alaska, then under martial law and the hard school through which I had passed gave me the stern recklessness of life necessary for such a post. The opium which I still used I took scientifically and was able to

keep my own counsel in all things. The first five years of the drug were comfortable, the second five it lost its happy effect. I had commenced to use the hypodermic needle and morphine, because of the quicker action of this method. During this period I was a soldier of fortune in South America, Mexico and Central America. I was a hospital steward in the Army, Sergeant Major in a regiment, First Sergeant of a Company and I was able to hold my own and fulfill my duties and yet I was becoming scarred from head to foot with the use of the hypodermic needle. After this I was reckless and careless as to my own life and I never knew, when the sun rose, whether I would live to see it set. I became wholly indifferent as to the consequences of my life, careless and reckless as to my actions. Then came an imprisonment, out of which I came back into the world a wreck. I made a desperate effort and managed to rehabilitate myself and once more held a good position in life, but unable to break from the bondage of the evil habit that behind everything held me in thralldom, I was once more dragged down and was led to commit deed after deed that I otherwise should have scorned. I have used as many as sixty grains of morphine and thirty grains of cocaine, during these miserable days of slavery.

Then came my last two years of imprisonment.

I was looked upon as a hard and desperate man in the prison, one who could not be reached or influenced in any way. One day I was sent for to the front office of the prison. The messenger said, 'A lady wants to see you.' 'Not me,' I replied, 'no one wants to see me; it is a mistake.' But it was not. To my surprise I found Mrs. McAlpin had sent for me. 'Twas almost a shock for I had no visitors and it was long since I had talked to a lady. Then came a never-to-be-forgotten meeting in the chapel, when the words spoken thrilled in my heart; I felt for once that I was compelled to stop and think. I had made many plans of what my future was to be, but they were plans of evil design. I had decided that my apprenticeship was served, that I ought to be able to do a master's work so I had determined never to stand for an arrest again. But I deliberately planned a coup that if successful would place me beyond the necessity for such things and if a failure, I had determined never to be taken alive. Then the Little Mother came and spoilt all my plans; as I heard her talk, I felt she was putting me out of business; she was putting me in the wrong. Shortly after this I was removed to a new cell and on a shelf in the corner I came upon a piece of paper; it was a partly torn piece of the *Volunteers' Gazette* smeared with whitewash. It had evidently been

pasted on a cell wall once, but had become detached and had been thrown up upon the shelf and there had been overlooked. It was difficult to decipher, but with care I made out these words that I have never forgotten. They were in an old message from the pen of our Leader to her 'boys.' 'If I can afford to face difficulties and yet go on with a faith that wavers not, you can also. So let us look up and hope, taking a firm hold of the strong arm of God and looking for courage to the stars of eternal promise that shine on above the clouds and mists of earth.'

"Do not think all the good things came at once. They did not. It took a long time to build up the edifice on the site of the old ruins. Alone I certainly should have failed and the last end would have been overwhelmingly worse than the first, but God's help is almighty and the 'I trust you' of His messenger meant everything."

Facing a stern struggle on his discharge this man proved strong enough to withstand. The old vices were abandoned. He took the sharp turn to the right that goes up the steep mountain side to the purer, clearer altitudes where we can walk in the light and enjoy the sunshine of God's approving smile. With wonder was the news received in prison, month after month, year after year that he was standing firm. To-day he is a

worker at my side, a strength and comfort to many another soul and a messenger of blessing in the many poor and sad homes that he visits. A little while since he returned to the prison where he had paced so often back and forth, back and forth through the weary hours of struggle in the narrow little cell. As he talked to the men who had known him, as he gave his thrilling message before the officers who had doubted the possibility of his reformation, he appeared to them as one who had gone into a new country and returned with tidings, not so much of the giants that dwelt there as of the milk and honey and fruits of peace and happiness which awaited those who in their turn would venture over the dividing line.

On one of my visits to Trenton, the warden told me of a man whose change of life was so remarkable that it had become the talk of the prison. He had been the most treacherous and dangerous of the prison population. Every officer agreed that he could never be trusted and for insubordination and violence they had never known his equal. After his conversion he was so quiet, amenable to discipline, cheerful and helpful in his attitude to others and at all times consistent in living up to his profession that his life made the most profound impression. In speaking of him to me the warden said that

it was nothing short of a miracle, and that the work was well worth while if only for that one case.

As I shall give many other life stories in their place, I will touch only on one more phase of the blessed influence that the new life brings to those in prison. It enables them to face the weary, dreary monotony of their life with happy cheerful contentedness, despite the difficulties and gloom that surround them.

There are many life-men in prison and many more with very long terms whom one might expect to find gloomy and morose, embittered in heart and utterly miserable. Among them I know innumerable cases of those who have become cheerful, patient and humbly grateful for every good gift of God, where we might see only cause for complaint. Many a Christian on the outside would have his faith strengthened by coming into contact with these men, and their bright experiences would make the world realize that the essence of Christianity is its triumph over circumstances. It can literally make the darkness light and put the song of freedom in the heart of the caged bird.

Here is a letter I received from a man whose causes for complaint might have been considered very justifiable. In the past he had been several times in prison and was known to the police as

an "ex-convict." On his last discharge he came to us and we were witness of his manly struggles to do right. It was before the days of our Hope Hall, and we could not help him so much as we longed to. He passed through a period of testing difficulties; he not only suffered from hunger but at times went to the point of starvation before he was able to find work, and endured it willingly rather than return to an evil but easy way of making a living. He would not accept charity, and never once asked for help except that help which we could give him by advice and sympathy, and hid from us the need and suffering through which he was passing. At last he found work and was doing well when he was arrested and "railroaded" to prison for an offense he did not commit.

I speak advisedly, for I was well acquainted with the case and have since heard from the man who did the deed. After his reimprisonment with a sentence of ten years, he found Christ as his Saviour. He wrote me constantly and the letter quoted below reached me after he had passed through a period of great suffering and weakness in the prison hospital.

"My dear Little Mother:—I am most happy to be able to write you a cheering letter. I am afraid my letters the past two or three months have been rather 'blue' reading to you,

but now, thank God, I am feeling very well and want to chase that sorrowful expression from your face which I suspect has been there of late on receiving my letters. I want to write you a cheering letter, first because I am cheerful, hopeful and happy myself and then because I know it will cheer and comfort you to hear that I am fighting the battle bravely, and that the victory we all look forward to so intensely is mine. I have indeed experienced the new life, and God has been my guide and refuge for two years now and I tell you, Little Mother, I would not exchange it for my old sinful life for the world. My past bad name and misdeeds sent me to this place for ten years, but I have gained by it something I never realized or had before, the love of our dear Saviour. I cannot help but think of the bright happy future in store for me. Although the state holds my body, my spirit is free, thank God, and though clouds do gather at times in this dreary place I have One to go to who is all sunshine and always understands and comforts me. Now Little Mother, I am feeling very well. Good Dr. Ransom, God bless him, has been like a father to me, you will never know how much he has done for me. He asked me the other day when I had heard from you. I told him and he said I must never forget you. Little Mother, I guess you know whether I could

or not. God bless you. I wish you every success on your western trip. Pray for me," etc.

I give the letter just in the natural outspoken way in which it was written. Shortly afterwards the Doctor wrote me that his patient was undoubtedly suffering from the first inroads of tuberculosis. I immediately set to work on the case, though, as a rule, I do not help men to regain their liberty. They know that is not my mission. Here however was one whom I believed innocent, who had served two years and who in all likelihood could not live out the other eight, a man whom I believed thoroughly safe to trust at large.

President Roosevelt, then governor, gave me his pardon the following New Year, and when the "boy" received my wire with the news the joy was too much for him, and he fainted away in the prison hospital. We welcomed him home, put him under excellent medical treatment and afterwards kept him for a spring and summer on the farm at Hope Hall. The disease was checked, he was perfectly restored to health, and went out into the world to work. He is still leading an upright life not far from New York and keeps in touch with us.

Could I give space to the hundreds of happy letters that tell of the change from gloom to brightness, from soul-bondage to freedom and new strength, it would be clearly seen that, though

the men deeply appreciate their Home and friends and are intensely grateful for all that may be done to help them, they fully realize the power behind the work. It is this power that has given them new hope and from it they have drawn their deepest consolation and surest certainty for the unknown future. Often in life the human friendship is the stepping-stone to the Divine. The moonlight makes us realize that the sun still shines.

Sometime since the Chaplain of Auburn, a devoted shepherd to that big flock wrote me as follows: "When you were so very sick three years ago the men here were very much alarmed and anxious for your recovery. Among them was an old-timer who had spent over twenty years solid in prison out of forty-nine years of life, the longest time of liberty between his incarcerations being seven months. When he heard that fears were entertained that you might not recover, he felt impelled to pray for you. In relating the story he said, 'I dropped on my knees to pray for her and as I did so I was overwhelmed with the thought that God would not hear such a sinner as I was. I began to pray for God to have mercy upon me and in my pleading forgot where I was and everything but the fact that I was a sinner and Jesus Christ my Saviour.' His sympathy for you was the means of leading him to Christ."

The sequel of this story made another record of successful right-doing on the outside as well as in prison.

Divine truth is not only whispered to our hearts from the leaves of the forest, sung to us by the mountain brook and flashed into our mind by the glint of the sunbeam, but sometimes it looks out at us from the wonders of science. A nerve has been severed by accident or during an operation and has remained for months or years perhaps useless and atrophied. Yet operative skill can resurrect the buried nerve ends and unite them again restoring perfectly the lost function. To this end especially when there has been much loss of substance it is necessary to interpose an aseptic absorbable body such as catgut or decalcified bone tube to serve as a temporary scaffolding for the products of tissue proliferation. Sutured to this connecting substance the nerve reunites using it as a bridge over or through which the union can be affected. When this end is accomplished the bridge or scaffolding is no longer needed and disappears through absorption. This it seems to me is the relative position of the soul-seeker to the unsaved. The poor soul has wandered far from God, is lost, buried beneath numberless hindering obstacles. To a great extent the functions of soul and conscience are destroyed, the power to serve God, to feel aright, to be pure

and good, and honest are gone; even feelings and aspirations for things Divine in many cases seem wanting, but we believe that all this can be reawakened if only the soul is brought near to God. A helpless human atom reunited to the Divine compassionate power above. The human friend and messenger or the organization that has the privilege of stretching out the helping hand to those thus needy can serve as the bridge or connection, the link useful in the right place but worse than useless if unaided by the loving miracle-working power from above.

As I turn the pages of our little Day Book a verse smiles out at me, the truth of which I know, and the sweet realization of which hundreds of happy hearts in prison to-day attest with earnest acclamation, "Their voice was heard and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place even into Heaven."

## V

### LETTERS FROM THE "BOYS"

In such a work as that within prison walls the results can only be fully understood by those who have the opportunity closely to watch the lives of the men and who can keep in touch with them through their after experience. Results cannot be statistically summed up and proclaimed to the world. They are too intangible and far-reaching to be fairly represented by figures. It is difficult to exhibit to the public the direct issues of this toil behind the scenes. Reporters have often asked to accompany me to prison and have earnestly requested permission to visit our Hope Halls for the purpose of describing the work. They have assured me that by allowing this, we could arouse much public interest. We have declined. Our movement does not live by sensational advertisement, and even wisely written reports would harm us with those whom we seek to save. The men in prison are intensely sensitive and through their bitter past experience very apt to be suspicious of the motives of those who go to them. Among the men who do not know us personally there might be the

idea that the work was done with a desire for advertising or lauding the Volunteers and to all the men it would give the unpleasant impression that they were still to be regarded in a different light from the denizens of the free world. These men naturally do not want to be exploited or ticketed by publicity. The very spirit of our work would be spoiled and its object defeated by such an error, and the self-respecting men would shun a place where their home life was not held sacred.

For similar reasons we do not have our graduates lined along the platforms of public halls to relate the stories of their past lives, their many crimes and subsequent conversions. This may be thought by some to be helpful in mission work and among church people, but in a work like ours it would be more than unwise. Talking of an evil past is often the first step that leads to repeating the evil deeds. Anything like boasting of the crimes and achievements of an evil past cannot be too strongly deprecated. In their own little home gatherings among themselves our "boys" freely give their testimonies as to what God has done for them, but even there with no outsiders present, they feel too deeply ashamed of the forgotten and buried past to wish to resurrect it. One of the mottoes of Hope Hall is, "Never talk of the past and so far as possible

do not think of it." There is in this however one disadvantage in that the world cannot have the object lesson which would surely be helpful to many when brought face to face with the results already gained. The missionary can bring back his Indian or Chinese convert and the dark face and simple earnest broken words appeal to a Christian audience; the doctor can exhibit his cures at the clinic; the teacher can glory over her scholars at their examinations, but in work like ours the victory can never be fully shown to the world without violating sacred confidences, and making a show of that which it would be cruelly unjust and unwise to parade.

That something of the grateful hearts and bright hopeful lives of our graduates may be known to others, I gather here and there, from hundreds of like letters, just a few that will speak for themselves.

To the "boys" still in prison one man writes: "Dear Comrades:—I will try and write a few lines to assure you, that you have in me a converted comrade who has left the 'college' but has not forgotten those still confined there" (as not a few have since found out).

"I am very grateful for this, another opportunity to send a few words of cheer to those who, I know, are deprived of many blessings of this nature that cost so little—a smile, a cheering

word or a pleasant nod that you dare not receive or return.

"Dear comrades, you probably would not know me now, as such a marvellous change has come over me. The dear Lord has been very good to me. I am very often surprised at the wonderful alterations in my life of late, the complete abnegation of my former desires, and, thank God! I now possess a fervent desire to henceforth be a man.

"At the time of my conversion I little thought my future life would be the success it has since proven to be.

"It is just a little over two years ago since I left 'college' and what has that two years wrought in my life? I have made many new friends, won their confidence and esteem, hold a fine position on the official paper of this town, live right with the editor in his own home, have been elected president of one of our local Sunday-schools, have a fine large class of little girls, am studying preparatory to entering the University of Illinois, have been restored to citizenship by Governor Yates, and am now purchasing a two thousand dollar piece of property.

"Dear comrades, let me give you two keys to my success. One—God loves to bestow where gratitude is extended; two—I have a private book on the page of which it reads: 'May 3d,

1902. One-tenth of my earnings, $—— paid and used in God's cause, May . . .'

"I fear I have gone beyond the space allotted me so must close, dear comrades, with this, my last remark, and if you forget all the rest, remember this: 'Value and grasp the opportunities to form character as they are extended, and God will take care of the rest.' Fraternally yours, ONE OF THE GRADUATES.

Another writes me after two years the following cheering news, though as I write I can add on another year for the record since that date.

"Dear Little Mother:—It is now close to two years since I gained my liberty from Joliet Prison, and I know that it will make you happy to know that I am leading a good life. The thought that you were instrumental in procuring my release upon parole, and that you still take an interest in me for the future gives me great joy and pride, and I thank God for the many benefits I have received at His hands through you.

"I have a splendid position at $21 per week, and save half of it. I have the respect of my employers and neighbors and live with my father and mother and have the knowledge that I am loved of God. I am happy, and have good reason to be. I shall always appreciate your loving kindness to me, also the help I have received from Adjutant and Mrs. McCormick and Ser-

geant Sam of Hope Hall No. 2.—Yours truly, Frank ——"

The next letter is from a man who was a very successful and notorious forger. Of him the warden said to me one day while he was still in prison, " If you can keep that man right after his discharge, you will save the country thousands of dollars. All your work would be worth while only for one such." He was, when we first met him a pronounced infidel and terribly embittered against the world in general. He became a sincere simple-hearted Christian, coming straight to us from fifteen years in prison. He was nervous and unstrung and felt utterly helpless to cope with life. In this condition Hope Hall meant everything to him. He soon regained strength, nerve and courage. He is now a prosperous man and has been out of prison nearly five years.

" Dear Little Mother :—It was my intention to write you ere this, but my time has been so much taken up with the cares and labor of my position, and things are so unsettled yet, that I put it off from one day to another, but I will not neglect to obey the call of duty; the more so, as it entails only a labor of love. I want you to believe me, that my heart is in no manner changed towards you and your work. It is just as full of love as when first I had the happiness to meet you in those dark and bitter days, when nothing

but darkness and friendlessness seemed to be before me, and you proved yourself such a faithful friend. Though I still live in the shadow of the past, there is such a lot of sunshine about me now. If any word of mine can be a comfort to you and a help to any one of my comrades still behind the bars, I gladly give the word.

"I am well in body and mind. It seems to me that I am making friends and well wishers everywhere. It lies with me to stay or not, but there are so many things in this particular business which I cannot entirely approve, that of late I thought much if it were not better for me to turn to something else. I have not decided yet, but as soon as I shall have done so, I will let you know. Be sure of one thing, though, whatever I shall do, or wherever I may be, there is none anywhere, that I know of, who can replace the friend who found me in wretchedness and stretched forth her hand to help and comfort me. To the Christ-love planted then in my heart, I shall remain true in storm or sunshine."

Since then this man has gone into business for himself. He is now married and has a happy little home.

Another writes:

"Dear Little Mother:—Yours of the 4th received, and I need not tell you how happy it made me feel when I realized that though you

are constantly behind the walls or touring across the country for your 'boys' you have not forgotten me and the other graduates. I am sure that there are none of the 'boys' who have forgotten you.

"What a blessing Hope Hall has been to the thousands that have passed through its doors, almost all of whom have been faithful to all that the V. P. L. means.

"I have a good position and am living the life of a God-fearing man. You would be surprised at the number of 'boys' that I meet in the city constantly, all looking bright and happy and doing well in every sense of the word.

"Asking your prayers and praying God to bless and prosper you in the work, Yours for Christ."

The remark has sometimes been made that it is innate laziness that leads to crime. I do not agree with this statement, but I can say that if any of our "boys" were lazy in the old days, they certainly have not shown it in their new life, for we find them most anxious to work and they often undertake and keep bravely at work far beyond their strength.

"My dear Little Mother:—I was both surprised and happy to receive your letter. I have not only friends of the right sort, but a position and a prospect which increases in brightness each time I look forward after doing nine years

in prison. When I received my pay yesterday it was the first legitimately earned money I have had in fifteen years. I have never regretted giving up the past. I am satisfied with my position, although the first few days I was not. I wrote to Lieutenant B——, and he advised me to stick, in my own behalf, and his advice I have taken. My work is hard and the hours long, but it can never be so hard as to make me throw up the sponge. I have a little of your writing, which I received on last Christmas in a Christmas present while at Hope Hall. God bless you and your work for the 'boys' behind the bars. Your comrade.

"P. S.—Enclosed find my first subscription to the Maintenance League."

The next letter is from a young man who had been the sorrow of his home people because of his wild life. He was bright, well educated and had good ability but he sold his soul to evil, demoralizing pleasures. He became a thief and at last reached the point where the patience of his people was exhausted and they believed it impossible for him to be reclaimed. He came to us from a prison where our work was not yet established. A copy of the *Gazette* had reached him and through its influence he learned to look upon us as his friends. He made no profession of conversion but merely declared that he was

anxious to try and make a success of an honest life. His stay at Hope Hall was quite a long one and we who watched him closely, could see the growth and development of his better self as he fought desperately the old vices.

Speaking to a comrade about this time he said, "When I have written in the past to Mrs. Booth I have never called her Little Mother because I was not sure I was going to stay right. I dared not call her that until I was *sure* but now when I write it will be always, 'Little Mother.'" Here is a letter from him after he had been twelve months in one position, and at the same time there came to me a letter full of commendation, from his employer.

"Dear Little Mother:—I am sorry that I must begin by asking your pardon for not having written for so long a time, but I am deeply thankful that my next words can be, that I have done well in every sense of the word. After the dull emptiness of the past, my life here comes like the opening of summer after a long winter of weariness and discontent. Day by day the influences that had grown up in the old life have been losing their place, and new interests coming into my heart that make me happier and stronger and better. I have written but few letters since the beginning of the year, and I cannot write much now, but I think you can un-

derstand much, perhaps all, of what I feel and would wish to say. But I can say, after the year that has passed since I left Hope Hall, that there are few months of my life that I can remember with more pleasure than those I spent there, and I have felt since leaving, that I there gained the strength I needed to help me start life anew. I shall always feel the influence of those months of close companionship with the men—each with a different story, and a different struggle, and, no matter where my life may be passed, or how dear the interests that may come into it, I shall always feel, when I think of Hope Hall, the tenderness one feels when thinking of an absent, well-loved friend."

The following note was an acknowledgment of a special copy of the little Day Book sent to one of our "boys" shortly after his graduation. "Dear Little Mother:—I am more pleased than I can say for your remembrance of me and the delightful manner of this remembrance emphasizes itself in the gift. Every day as I read this precious little book I will think of the giver, and pray that God may grant unto you every good and perfect gift. I am now in the world and must fight my fight, but I know that that power which alone can subdue the enemy will be my strength and shield if I but walk circumspectly. I know too that the testimony of words will

avail nothing, but that it is my life that must speak. In the selection of the evening portion for to-day I read, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light.' I want my life to say this for me. Accept, dear Little Mother, the remembrance of a grateful heart and in the charity of your prayers remember me."

To those who do not know the writers much behind the written words cannot be realized and I find myself saying, "After all what will these pages mean to the public?" To me they are unspeakably precious; they represent so many nights of prayer and anxious days, after the darkness of which they come as the touch of a rosy dawn; they remind me of tears to which they have brought the rainbow gleam of promise. I almost grudge them to other eyes and yet if by their words other hearts may be strengthened, their value will be doubled.

## VI

### UNWELCOMED HOME-COMING

LIBERTY! How much that word means to all of us! It is the keynote of our Constitution. It is the proud right of every citizen. The very breeze that flutters our starry flag sings of it; the wild forests, the rocky crags, the mountain torrents, the waving grasses of the wide-stretching prairies echo and reecho it. Yet much as we may think we know of the fullness, sweetness and power of that word, we cannot form an estimate of its meaning to one who is in prison. He has lost the gift and those who have it not, can often prize the treasure more than those who possess it.

People have talked to me about the prisoner becoming quite reconciled to his lot, and in time growing indifferent to the regaining of liberty. I think this is one of the fallacies that the outside world has woven. I do not know from what prison such an idea emanated. So far as my observation goes, I have yet to find the first prisoner who did not long with an unspeakable desire for freedom. Even the older life-men who have been in long enough to outlive all

their friends, who have no kith or kin to return to, and for whom there is no home-spot on earth, plead earnestly for the chance to die in liberty. They hope and plan, they appeal and pray for pardon, though it would send them from the familiar sheltering walls into a strange, cold world, but the world of free men. In every cell are men who count all dates by one date, the day coming to them in the future when they will be free again. Sometimes it is very far away and yet that does not make it any less vividly present in their thought. The chief use in the calendar is to mark off the passing days and some have even figured off minutely the hours that stand between them and liberty.

There is a weird cry that breaks out sometimes amid the midnight stillness of the prison cell-house, the venting of a heart's repressed longing, "Roll around, 1912," and from other cells other voices echo, each putting in the year of his liberty. I heard the cry break out in chapel one Christmas day as the gathering at their concert broke up, every year being called by the "boys" who looked forward to it as their special year of liberty. "Roll around, 1912." How far away it seems to us even in liberty, but how much further to the man who must view it through a vista of weary toilsome prison days.

Having talked with many just before their dis-

charge, when the days and hours leave but a few grains to trickle through the glass of time they have watched so closely, I know just what a strain and tension these last days represent. Often the man cannot sleep for nights together under the excitement and the nervous strain proves intense. Through the dark nights of wakefulness he puts the finishing touches to the castles in the air that he has been building through the weary term when with his body in prison, his mind wandered out into the days to come, and hope, battling with fear, painted for him a rainbow in the storm clouds of the future.

Can you imagine how hard and bitter is the awakening for such a man when he returns to life to find himself a marked and branded being, one to be distrusted and watched, pointed out and whispered about, with all too often the door of honest toil shut in his face? The man discharged from prison is not unreasonable. He does not expect an easy path. We do not ask for him a way strewn with roses or a cheer of welcome. He has sinned, he has strayed from the right road, plunged over the precipice of wrong-doing, and it must at best be a hard climb back again. The men do not ask nor do we ask for them an easy position, the immediate restoration of the trust, confidence and sympathy of the world on the day of their return. They

know they cannot expect, having thrown away their chances in an evil past, to find them awaiting their return to moral sanity. I have not found them unreasonable and certainly very few have been lazy or unwilling to prove their sincerity. What we do ask for the released prisoner and what we feel he has a right to ask of the world is a chance to live honestly, an opportunity to prove whether or not he has learned his lesson so that he may climb back into the world of freedom and into a useful respectable position where he may be trusted.

When God forgives us He says that our sins and transgressions shall be blotted out like a cloud or cast into the sea of His forgetfulness. He believes in a buried past. The world alas! too often goes back to that wretched old grave to dig up what lies there, and flaunts the miserable skeleton before the eyes of the poor soul, who had fondly hoped that when the law was satisfied to the last day and hour, he had paid for his crime, and might begin afresh with a clean sheet to write a new record.

How often we hear the term "ex-convict." Do the people who use it ever stop to think that the wound is as deep and the term as odious as that of "convict" to the man who has been in prison? When he is liberated, when the law has said, "Go in peace and sin no more," he is a free

man, and no one has the right to regard him as other than this. Any name which marks him out is a cruel injustice. If the State provided for the future of these men; if they were not dependent on their own labors for their daily bread, it would not be quite so ghastly, but when one thinks that this prejudice and marking of discharged prisoners, robs them of the chance of gaining a living, and in many instances forces them back against their will into a dishonest career, one can realize how truly tragic the situation is.

Many a time one can pick up a daily paper and see the headlines, "So and So to be Liberated To-morrow," or, "Convict . . . will return to the world," or some such announcement. If a man who is at all notorious has finished a term in prison, the article tells of the crime he committed five, six or even ten years before; what he did; how he did it; why he did it. Some account of his imprisonment—with an imaginary picture of himself in his cell—may be added, with the stripes in evidence, and even a chain and ball to make it more realistic. This heralds the day of his discharge. What a welcome back after his weary paying of the penalty through shame and loneliness, toil and disgrace, mingled often with bitter tears of repentance during those best years lost from his life forever! This raking

up of the past reminds his friends and acquaintances of the wretched story which had been nearly forgotten, and tells it to many more who had not heard of it. Is this fair? Perhaps it may be said that this is part of the penalty of doing wrong. I answer that it should not be! In a civilized land our wrong-doers must be punished by proper lawful means. The law does not require this publicity after release. Why should the world ask it? Besides that, could we not quote the recommendation given of old that only those who are without sin have the right to cast stones, and, if that precept were lived up to, very few would ever be cast at all, for the saint in heart and life would be charitable.

It does not take many days of tramping in a fruitless search for work, or many rebuffs and slights, to shake for the most sanguine man the foundation of those castles he saw in the air before his term expired. When money is gone, and there is no roof to cover the weary head, no food to stop the gnawing of hunger, and no friend at hand to sympathize, the whole airy structure topples to the ground amid the dust and ashes of his fond hopes, and the poor man learns in bitterness of heart an anger against society that makes him more dangerous and desperate than he ever was before.

Much is said of the habitual criminal. Some

contend that he is born, that, as a poor helpless infant, he is doomed to a career of crime and vice. Others believe that such lives are the outcome of malformation of brain and skull, and yet others have their own pet theories to account for the large number of "repeaters," as they are called in some states, "old-timers," or "habituals," as they are known elsewhere. I have personally known many of these men and have traced their lives, talked with them heart to heart, and I can tell the world, as my profound conviction, that the habitual criminal is made, not born; manufactured by man, not doomed by a monster-god; that such criminals are the result of the lack of charity, of knowledge or thought or whatever else you may like to call it, that makes the world shrink from and doom the sinner to a return to sin, that treads further down in the mire the man who has fallen.

What is a man to do on leaving prison with his friends dead or false to him, with no home, little money, the brand of imprisonment upon him, nervous, unstrung, handicapped with the loss of confidence in himself, and with neither references nor character? The cry of the world is, "Let the man go to work; if he is honest, and proves himself so, then we will trust him and stretch out a hand to help him." Ah, then if that day ever comes to him, he will not need

your outstretched hand. Your chance to help and strengthen him will have passed forever; the credit of his success will be all his own, but few can reach that happy day. It is easy to say, let the man work, but where shall he find occupation; who wants the man who can give no clear account of himself? If in honesty of heart he tells the truth and states, "I am straight from prison," he is told to go on his way, and often the voice that gives the command is harsh with indignant contempt and loathing, and yet this man has one inalienable right in common with all his fellow-men, the right to live, and to live, the man must have bread. Some have said to me that it is cruel that the right to end their lives is denied them, for should they commit suicide they would only be condemned, and if they attempted it and were not successful, they would be imprisoned for trying to do away with that which no man helped them to make endurable.

These released men are not of the beggar class. Their hands are eager for work. Their brains have a capacity for useful service, yet they have to stand idle and starve, or turn to the old activities and steal. Does the world say this is exaggerated? I declare I have again and again had proof of it. I believe that with hundreds who are now habitual criminals, and have made

themselves experts in their nefarious business, there was a day when they truly wanted to be honest and tried to follow up that desire, but found the chance denied them.

Of course the man who has a home, who has friends standing by him or who is a very skilled workman can escape this trial in a great measure, but I speak of the many who are friendless, and hence must face the world alone. It has been said by those who would excuse their apathy and lack of interest in the question, that, while there are honest workmen unemployed, they do not see why people should concern themselves about the returning criminal. This is very poor logic. You might as well argue that it is sentimental to feed with care our sick in the hospitals, because there are able bodied folk starving in the streets of our cities. The Spartans took their old and sick and weak to the caves of the mountains and left them there to meet death. Perhaps that was the most convenient way of getting out of their problems and shirking a care that meant trouble and expense. But we are not in long-ago pagan Sparta but in twentieth century Christian America. Quite apart from his claim on our sympathy as followers of Christ, in the purely selfish light of the interest of the community, it is dangerous to deprive men of the chance of making an honest living. Naturally they will then

prey on others and the problem will become more and more complicated as they go farther from rectitude and honesty.

I know some writers of fiction have played on this theme of the poor worthy workman and the unworthy "ex-prisoner" with telling effect. They have made those who tried to help the latter appear in the light of foolish sentimentalists while the workman is depicted as starving for want of the friendship they refuse him. This however is but a stage trick of literary coloring. The honest workman has his union behind him; he is often out of work through its orders; if he does not belong to the union, he at least has a character and, in this age of philanthropy, charity and many missions, he can apply for aid which will be speedily given, if he proves that he is deserving. He may be unfortunate but he has not behind him the record, around him the almost insurmountable difficulties of the man from prison. We ought to help the latter because in most instances he cannot help himself. Alas, there are very few ready to render practical help, writers of fiction to the contrary.

I do not advocate carrying him and thus making him dependent upon others. I do not believe in pauperizing any one. Give him a fair start and then let him take his own chance with any other workman and by his own actions stand or fall.

I was visiting my Hope Hall on one occasion after a lengthy western trip. Many new men who had returned during my absence were anxious for personal interviews and so I spent most of the day in this occupation. One man who was ushered into my presence was considerably older than any other of the newcomers. Grasping my hand he told me with tears in his eyes of his gratitude for the Home. I asked him if he was happy. "Happy," he answered, "why I am happier than I have ever been in my life." As we talked I studied his face. I could recognize no criminal trait and I wondered at one of his age with hair already white, being friendless and homeless and at the place where he must begin life all over again. I came to the conclusion that he had probably served a very long term for some one offense committed in his early manhood. It is not my custom to bring up the past. We do not catechise our men concerning their deeds of the past. If it will help a man to tell me in confidence any part of his story, I gladly listen, but I never make one feel that I am eager to learn the wretched details that in many instances are better buried and forgotten. In this case, however, I diverged from my rule sufficiently to ask this man whether he had done a very long term, that I might answer to myself some of those questions that would better help

me to prove myself his friend in the future. "No," he answered with a smile, "I have that to be thankful for; I have never been sentenced to any very long term. I have only done five short five year bits." Just think of it! Twenty-five years in all! The record of an habitual criminal indeed. Speaking afterwards to one of my workers, who knew the man well, I asked him how it was that this had happened. He told me that it was just the old story, that could be recorded about many others. In his youth this man had committed a crime which called for a five year term of imprisonment. He had been overwhelmed with shame and regret, and during that first term in prison had learned his lesson. During that period his father and mother both died; he came back into the world homeless, friendless, a stranger. In his pocket he had a few dollars given by the State and he started out hopefully to look for work. He was met by rebuff, disappointment and failure; then came hungry days and nights, when he had no money to pay for lodging, and had to sleep in any sheltered corner where he might hope to escape the vigilance of the police. Then followed starvation, and he returned to what seemed the inevitable; he stole that he might live; was arrested and sent back to prison. This was repeated after each discharge, until at last he had Hope Hall to

turn to, a haven of refuge from the miserable sin and failure of his life.

A story even more startling was told me by a chaplain of one of our State Prisons. The man of whom he spoke was brought up in the most wretched environment; his parents were drunkards, his home did not deserve the name. As a mere child he was cast out on the streets to earn his own living by begging or theft. If he did not bring back enough at night to suit his parents, he was beaten and thrown out on the streets to sleep. He became early an expert young thief; from picking pockets he advanced to a more dangerous branch of the profession and became a burglar. When about eighteen years of age he was arrested and given a long term in prison. During that term he was for the first time taught the difference between right and wrong; he learned to read and write in the night school and thus was opened up a new world before him. He heard the teachings of the chaplain from the chapel platform and for the first time, he understood that it was possible even for him to live a different kind of life from that which had seemed to be his destiny. On his discharge from prison, he was a very different man from what he had been on his admission. He went out with the firm resolve to do right. He laughed at difficulties, saying cheerily that he

was going to work and feeling in his heart that with his earnest desire to do so faithfully, he must make a success of the future. After a few days of effort in the big city, he found that it was not so easy to obtain employment as he had anticipated. Day after day he sought it earnestly, always meeting with the same disappointment. Leaving the city, he tramped out to the surrounding towns and villages; for several weeks this man sought for an honest start in life, but no hand was stretched out to help him. His money was long since spent; he had to sleep at night under some hedge or in some secluded alley way. The food on which he subsisted was the broken pieces and partly decayed fruit picked from the ash barrels of the more fortunate. At last flesh and blood could stand the strain no longer, and he returned to Boston, his strength gone, his mind benumbed and a fever raging in his blood. Crossing the Common on a bleak rainy afternoon, he stumbled and lost consciousness. Hours passed and in the shadow he was unnoticed. The poor, lost, unwanted outcast lay there, with the great happy busy world rushing on within a few feet of him. A man who was crossing the Common chanced to stumble over the prostrate figure. He stooped to see what lay in his path and finding that it was a man, he turned him so that the lamplight fell upon his

face and then with an exclamation called him by name.

Truth is sometimes stranger than fiction. This poor, dying, friendless man had been found by perhaps the one man who knew him best in that great city. Thinking that he was sleeping or perhaps drunk, the man shook him, saying, "Who's going to build a monument for you that you lie out here on the Common catching your death of cold?" Finding no answer, he repeated his question, adding, "Trying to be honest, are you? Who cares enough to build your monument, I want to know." Then he realized that the man was past speech, and lifting him from the ground, he tenderly guided the staggering foot-steps to his own home. True, his home consisted of rooms above a saloon; true, this Samaritan was himself the leader of a gang of burglars, and yet the deed was one of charity, and his was the one hand stretched out to help this sick and helpless man. For weeks he was carefully nursed and tended. The doctor was called to watch over him. When the fever left him and strength returned, nourishing food was provided, and when he was well enough to dress he was welcomed in the room where the gang met and not in any sense made to feel that he had been a burden. All this time no effort had been made to draw him back into the old way of

living. One night as he sat at a little distance he heard his friends plan a burglary. They had a map stretched out upon the table before them and had marked upon it the several positions to be occupied by different members of the gang, some to enter, while others watched and guarded the house. One point was unguarded and while they were seeking to readjust their company to fill this place, the young man rose and coming to the table, he laid his finger on the spot and said, "Put me down there." The leader of the gang, who had proved so truly his friend, laid his hand upon his shoulder and said quickly, "Don't you do it! You have been trying to be honest, stick to it! You have had a long term in prison and are sick of it. Don't go back to the old life." But the boy turning on him (and there was much truth in his answer) said, "When I was sick and hungry, who cared? When I was trying to be honest, who helped me? When I lay dying on the common, who was it stretched out a helping hand, who paid my doctor's bill and who nursed me? You did and with you I shall cast in my lot." He would not be dissuaded. That night he not only went out and aided in the burglary but was caught by the police. In his trial the fact came out that he had only been a few months out of prison. The fact that he had been so soon detected in crime with his old gang was

evidence of his criminal propensities and he was returned to prison for an extra long term as an old offender.

There is, however, a court above where all cases will be tried again and there the Judge will take loving cognizance of the hard struggle, the awful loneliness and suffering, the earnest desire to do right that went before this fall, and His judgment will be tempered with divine mercy.

The watching and hounding of men to prison by unprincipled detectives is not unknown in this country. In fact, you can find such cases often quoted in the newspapers and every prison has its quota of men who could tell you terrible stories of what they have endured. I do not want to appear hostile to the Detective Department, for detectives are necessary and many may be conscientious men. The criminal element know and respect the conscientious detective, but they have a most profound contempt for the man who vilely abuses his authority and seems to have no conscience where one known as an "ex-prisoner" is concerned. Revelations have been made in many of our big cities of the blackmail levied upon criminals and the threats which have been used to extort money. There is no need of my quoting cases to prove this point, as it has been clearly proved over and over again in po-

lice investigations which are fresh in the memory of the public.

The man from prison is a marked man and hence an easy prey to the unscrupulous detective. Jean Val Jean, the hero of Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables" is perhaps looked upon as a fictitious creation of the great novelist's brain, but he is a reality! There are Jean Val Jeans in the prisons of this land and many a man struggling to remake his life, longing to forget the disgraceful past, has been dogged and haunted by his crime, to be taken back at last to the horror of a living death which, he had hoped, would never claim him again.

The impression and opinion that there is no good in one who has been in prison not only robs him of sympathy on the part of the good and honest and makes him an easy prey to the unscrupulous, but lessens the compunction of society for the wrong it does him. "Oh, well," cry the righteous in justification of their actions, "he would probably have done the first job that offered, so it makes no odds. Criminals are safer in prison anyway." So justice is drugged with excuses and the helpless one she should have protected is handed over to rank injustice, with the excuse that he deserves his fate. Has not the sword of justice once been raised over him, setting him aloof from his fellows?

Some years ago a young man who had fully learned his lesson in prison was discharged from Sing Sing, with the earnest desire to retrieve the past. At first it was difficult to find a position, but at last he obtained employment with a large firm where he served some months, giving every satisfaction to his employers. As time wore on, he felt that the sad shadow of the past was gone forever. One day as he walked up Broadway carrying under his arm a parcel which he was to deliver to a customer, he felt a hand suddenly fall on his shoulder. The cheery tune he had been whistling abruptly ceased. It seemed as if a cloud passed over the sunshine obscuring it as he turned to recognize in the man who accosted him, the detective who had once sent him to state prison. "What are you doing?" asked the detective. "I am working for such and such a firm," he said. "What have you got under your arm?" was the next question. "Some clothes I am taking to a customer." "We'll soon find out the truth of this," said the detective and despite the entreaties of the man, he marched him back to the store, walked with him past his fellow-employees and accosted the manager. "Is this man in your employ?" he asked. The question was answered in the affirmative. "Did you send him with these clothes to a customer?" Again the satisfactory answer. "Oh,

well," said the detective, "it is all right but I thought I had better inquire and let you know that this man is an ex-convict." Then he went on his way, but his work had been well done. The young man was disgraced before all his fellow-clerks and was promptly dismissed, not for dishonesty, not for laziness, not because he had proved unworthy of trust, but simply and solely because he had once been in prison. Once more he was made to suffer for the crime which the law said he had fully expiated.

The following instance I give from one of our daily papers, only the other day.

"How far a policeman may go in an effort to arrest persons charged with no specific crime, but who have their pictures in the Rogues' Gallery, may be determined by Commissioner Greene as a result of a shooting in Twenty-third Street yesterday, when that thoroughfare was crowded.

"A detective sergeant, while in a car, saw seated near the rear door two men whom he recognized, he says, as pickpockets. The men's pictures and descriptions being, as alleged, in Inspector McClusky's private album. The detective therefore determined to take them to headquarters.

"When near Lexington Avenue the two men left the car, being closely followed by their pursuer. The detective sergeant called upon them

to halt, which they refused to do, and he fired. One of the men says the detective sergeant fired at him, but the detective insists that he fired in the air. Women screamed and men took refuge in entrances to buildings. Two policemen then arrested the men, who gave their names as John Kelley and Daniel Cherry. Commissioner Greene has ordered an investigation."

I need add no comment. The story is merely an illustration of the old adage, "Give a dog a bad name, and you might as well hang him." I do not want my remarks to be one-sided. The detective officer is needed. Some of the officers are very able, bright men and I have known some who have been fair-minded and good at heart but that great abuses of power have been practiced and many men made victims to the old idea that the once marked man has no rights, no honor, and can come to no possible good, is an incontestable fact. Public opinion, steered by Christian charity regarding the rights of those who cannot protect themselves, is the safe-guard to which we must appeal.

Perhaps the bitterest experience is that of the man who succeeds in getting a start, who strives hard and in time makes for himself a position by faithful, honest work and who after it all, has the building of years torn down, and his life blasted by the unjustifiable raking up of the past. A

story startling the state of Ohio was flashed all over the country not long since, which very pointedly illustrated this fact. A man in his youth had committed an offense which had sent him to prison for five years; I believe it was the striking of a blow in a moment of anger; he served his term and it proved the lesson of his life. Coming out of prison, he moved into the state of Ohio and found work in Columbus. It was humble work at the very bottom of the ladder, but, as years passed, his industry was rewarded by great success and at last he became a very prominent and wealthy business man. He had had to confide his past to one or two people in the city, so that when he commenced to work, he would not be doing so under false colors. As time went on and wealth, social position and important business connections became his, these people in a most unprincipled manner commenced the levying of blackmail. For many years his life was made miserable, and he was thus robbed of thousands of dollars.

There was nothing dishonorable in his life; he was a perfectly straight, successful business man, but he knew well that the prejudice against the man that has been in prison is so great that his successful career would be ruined and he himself ostracized, if these blackmailers published the fact which they threatened to reveal, that he had

once been in prison. At last when he could stand this wretched position no longer, he made a statement to the papers, through his lawyer, publishing to the world the fact of his early imprisonment, that he might thus break the weapons of his enemies. If the world's attitude to the returned prisoner were more rational and its judgment were passed on his after life and conduct instead of the mere fact of the past penalty, such a state of things would be impossible.

Many will have read of the case that came up in the New York papers, of the fireman who had served faithfully for fifteen years in the fire department, receiving honorable mention for his bravery. In his youth he had been in a prison, had served part of his term, from which he had been pardoned by the then governor of our state; during the investigation in the fire department this man was called to the stand, and immediately his past was probed into by the opposing lawyer. He pleaded with tears in his eyes, that the fifteen years of faithful service should have lived down that one offense of his youth, but mercy was not shown him and the head lines of the papers on the following day announced in the most glaring type the "Ex-convict's" testimony. Faithfulness, honesty, courage were all as nothing compared to the

stain which years of suffering and hard labor in prison ought to have obliterated.

I had watched with interest the career of one of our "boys" who had been a most notorious prisoner, living a desperate life and having long experience in crime, which had brought him to the position where many spoke of him as beyond hope. He had been out of prison over a year and was doing well; he had been graduated from our Home and held a position to which we sent him, most creditably, and was now living with his wife in a little flat in Harlem, working in a shop where his service was giving thorough satisfaction. Some flats were entered and property stolen in the upper part of the city. There was no trace of the perpetrator of the crime. A detective who had known this man in the past, learning that he was in the city, started out to hunt for him. He discovered the fact that he lived in Harlem: without a scrap of evidence against him, he went to the house and put him under arrest, and the first I knew of the case was a flaring account in the papers headed, "Mrs. Booth's Protégé Gone Wrong." We received almost immediately a letter from him from the Tombs, and one of my representatives went at once to see our "boy." The second newspaper article gave an interview with the detective, in which he mentioned the fact that he had been at

my office and that I had told him that I had long since suspected this young man of wrong-doing; that I had no faith or confidence in him, and could no longer help him. At the time the interview was supposed to have taken place, I was fifteen hundred miles away. When the case was brought up for investigation, my representative was present to stand by the man, and to tell the judge what we knew concerning him. There not being a particle of evidence to connect him with the crime, the judge, with some irritation, was about to dismiss the case, when the detective stepped forward, and asked that the man be held to enable him to make further investigation. "What are you going to investigate?" asked the judge, "you have no evidence to go on." "Oh," said the detective, "I want to look up his past; he has been many times in prison." Then, I am glad to say, the judge meted out justice, and turning to the detective, reproved him most severely. He told him that he was there to judge present facts and evidence, not to condemn a man because of his past, and that it did not matter what the man had been, if there was no evidence that he had perpetrated crime, no one had any right to hold him or to investigate records that did not concern the case. The man on his discharge went back to his former employment, but it had been a severe and bitter trial, for naturally

he felt in his own heart the injustice of the whole incident. He has, however, courageously fought through his dark days and now for years has been a successful and prosperous man.

Of course there are men who come out of prison planning to do evil. They are those who have not learned their lesson, and to whom imprisonment has proved merely a deterring influence instead of a reforming one. Some men deliberately go to the first saloon to celebrate their discharge and some may be found in the old haunts the first night of freedom. But even with these cases, which are apparently utterly hardened and careless, there may have been a time before they drifted so far, when they also longed for the friendly hand, which might have helped them back from the deep waters to the safe ground of honest living. Careless and hardened as they may seem to-day, we have no right to think that there may not be an awakening to better possibilities to-morrow; so while there is life, we should see to it that so far as our part of the question is concerned, there is the possibility of hope also.

## VII

### WELCOMED HOME

"Home, home, sweet sweet home,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

How often and how fervently are those simple words sung out by earnest loyal hearts from end to end of the English-speaking world. The refrain has burst forth at Christmas gatherings, at home-comings from school, on every festive occasion, around all true home hearths, and its echo has been heard on plain and prairie, amid mountain peaks and forest fastness, as wanderers have in thought turned homeward. There is perhaps no place where the old tune and well loved words sound with more pathos, than when the refrain is raised in a prison audience and rolled through the chapel or around the gallery by a thousand manly voices. Heads are bowed, eyes grow dim with tears and sometimes lips tremble too much to frame the words. I have heard it thus and have tried to read the faces of the men as the song called up to them the past. Some have sung with a longing and yearning in which still lingered the note of glad possession, while for them arose a picture of a dear home-spot

where they were still held in loving remembrance and to which in the future they would again be welcomed. Others under still deeper emotion have seen a vision of the home that was, the memory of childhood's happy hours gone forever with the passing of the mother-heart into the far-away grave. Fathers sometimes drop their heads upon the seats before them and strong men though they are, give way to bitter tears as they picture the little white-robed tots who kneel up in their beds to pray that papa may some day come home, and ask the mother over again in childish perplexity why he stays away so long, and then drop to sleep wondering at her tears. But some of those in the great audience know no home as a future bright spot, for they have never known the sacred influence which should be every man's birthright. Even in their hearts there is a longing to possess that which they have missed, and the song awakens a strange, untranslatable thrill that makes them feel lonely and forsaken without knowing why.

Quite early in the history of our work the need of practical help for men on their discharge from prison became very evident. They had given us their confidence and accepted our proffered friendship, had made resolves to live honest lives in the future and would go forth to be met by the difficulties and sometimes almost insur-

mountable obstacles awaiting them in an unfriendly world. Was it not natural to foresee that they would turn in their difficulty to those who had been their friends in prison? What then were we to do? Give them advice, bid them trust in God? All very well in the right place, but, to the penniless, homeless man, cold charity. We realized that to make our work thoroughly practical, we must be as ready and able to help the man on his discharge, as to counsel him during his incarceration. To do this successfully, we soon understood that for the homeless and friendless man we must provide a home. Some who have concerned themselves with a scientific discussion of plans to help discharged prisoners have argued against the wisdom of such a step. They speak of the danger of congregating men and would, I suppose, advocate the finding work for the man on the day of his discharge from prison. It is always easy to theorize, discuss and argue when you are not in the midst of an urgent need and obliged at once to face the subject and to decide by the circumstances instead of by your own worked-out conclusions. Practical experience is that which proves and alone can prove the wisdom or folly of any step. We have found in our work that it is not possible or practicable to find work for these men on the day of their discharge.

Many a one coming from State Prison is absolutely unfit to take his place in the busy working world so soon after his prison experience. On the other hand, is it wise to ask business men to take men whom we have not tested and of whom we know nothing? Some men, indeed many are in downright earnest, but a few may not be, and if one recommends a man without knowing his capacity, suitability or sincerity, one is asking of the employer that which few would care to undertake. If men thus placed at work directly after their discharge fail through inability or lack of nerve and strength, they become utterly discouraged and it is a sore temptation to turn aside to an easier way of gaining a livelihood. If on the other hand, they go wrong, the employer is prejudiced, and the door is shut against others who might have made good use of the chance. I believe this is one of the causes that has brought prison work into disrepute and has made business men adverse to lending a helping hand to men from prison.

That the gathering of men together for a time in a well conducted happy home is not in any way detrimental, but exceedingly helpful, we have had ample time to prove. If there is no home for these who are homeless, where are they to go? Respectable boarding houses and hotels would not willingly receive them and would be

beyond their means. They would have to go down to the common lodging houses where they would immediately be liable to meet old companions and be faced again with the temptation of spending their evenings on the street or in the saloon. The rapid improvement physically, mentally and spiritually of those who have come to Hope Hall has spoken more loudly than any arguments or theories could have done. That many men come out of prison in a terribly nervous, unmanned condition is incontestable. Far be it from me, knowing of the improvements made during the last few years in prison management, to cast any reflection on the care of our prisoners, still, the fact is here and must be faced. If we were dealing with horses and cattle, proper care in feeding, exercising, and in the planning of hygienic surroundings would suffice to keep the subjects well and would insure their good condition, for there one has only the body to deal with. In the case of human beings, we must reckon with the heart, brain and sensitive nervous system. Well fed, well clothed, well housed and yet with the mind and heart crushed and sore and anxious, at times almost insane with despair, a man may become a wreck however well treated, and as years pass, he will lose the nerve and force he so much needs for the efforts of the future. Even the most phlegmatic

of dispositions, coming out into a world after years of the strictly ordered routine prison life, feels strangely cut adrift and utterly bewildered in the rush of the world that has forged ahead in its racing progress while he has been so long side-tracked. Fresh air, a good sleeping place, friendly faces and cheering Christian influence with elevating surroundings mean everything to a man in these early, anxious days.

Thank God some have homes to go to, where a loving mother or a tender wife stands between them and the gazing, critical world. There they can regain self-control and can have a breathing space, before they face the struggle which is almost sure to await them. But what of those who have no home, no friends, no place to turn? Especially does this need confront us in the case of the long time prisoner. Think of coming back into life after fifteen or twenty years' imprisonment! After six weeks in a hospital room, the streets seem to us a roaring torrent of danger. One feels as if every car were bent on running one down and the very pedestrians are possessed to one's imagination with a desire to collide with one at every step. The weakened nerves are alarmed at the unusual stir and noise; one's eyes are dazzled at the glare of light and one's feet seem to move, not with one's own volition, but with some notion of their own as to

where they should stagger and it is a relief to creep away into some quiet corner. Now picture the return of one who has been banished behind high gates and kept in the close limits of cell and prison workshop for twenty or thirty years. The "L" road, cable cars, electric trolleys, sky scrapers and countless other wonders of the age are absolutely new to him, and in the crowded streets, the throngs of human beings pressing hither and thither are all strangers to this man from the inside world. Added to this is the knowledge of his own condition, and he is an easy prey to an abnormally developed fancy. He imagines that every man who meets him can tell whence he has come. His very nervousness and lack of confidence make him act suspiciously.

Then there are the sick. The fact that a man has been more or less ailing for months is not a cause for detention in prison. When his term expires, the authorities have no power to keep him and naturally such a man would bitterly resent the lengthening of his term; and yet he may be far too ill to undertake work and in just the condition when kindness and care would mean everything to both present and future.

Surely it is needless to picture more causes for the step that we felt led to take as the second phase of our work. The "boys" needed a home and the need called for speedy action. The

home was planned and opened six months after the work in prison had started, and hundreds to-day look back to it as a blessed haven of rest; a bright spot which has been to many the first and only one in life. When we first started, the plans were all talked over in prison. I took the men, not the public, into my confidence. The idea was warmly welcomed and every item of news about the project looked for with keenest interest. Our idea was to have a place that would be a real home and not an institution. We did not want a mission in the city with sleeping rooms attached; certainly not a place placarded "Prisoners' Home," "Shelter for Ex-convicts," etc. Our friends were no longer prisoners, our guests were never to be called ex-convicts. It was to be a home hidden away from the public, and as much as possible patterned after that to which the mother would welcome her boy were she living and able to do so. In Sing Sing Prison we named our Home, and the name chosen was "Hope Hall." We felt that that name would have no brand in it and we earnestly prayed that it might prove the threshold of hope to those who passed through its doors to the new life of the future. In the matter of furnishing, the same idea of homelikeness and comfort without extravagance was carried out. Pretty coloring and light

cheeriness have always been aimed at as affording the best contrast to the gloom and dreariness of the narrow prison cell.

The house we first opened was a large frame building on Washington Heights, that had once been a Club. After two years we moved into the country on Long Island, that we might have a home of our own and more ground to cultivate. We purchased a ten acre farm and by degrees have enlarged and improved the house, reclaimed and cultivated the ground and made a home which proves a veritable surprise to the many who have looked forward to it for years, and yet even in their dreams have not painted it as brightly as it deserved. If you give, give freely, that the receiver may feel that you have done your best and then you will appeal to his true heart gratitude. If your giving is with many limitations the receiver will say, "Oh, I see they think anything is good enough for me," and your intended blessing may lose all its value. We have realized this fact and borne it in mind in all our work. As our superintendent showed a newcomer around the Home on one occasion, the man turned to him and with eyes filled with tears exclaimed, "Oh! I ought to be good after this." The same thought has been seen in many lives and we have wanted our Home to so truly fulfill its purpose that it

might form a veritable barrier between the men and their past.

Of course the undertaking was not an easy one. We had no capital behind us, the Volunteer movement was then but a young organization and our work in the prisons was at a stage where people looked at it as a doubtful experiment. Money was gathered slowly and very uncertainly. Some months, through our meetings we received very cheering returns; during others, especially in the heat of summer we had to face grave anxiety and often did not know where the next dollar was coming from. On one such dark day, when bills were due and the funds exhausted, at a meeting of my League in prison, I told the "boys" of the burden I was bearing. Already we had so truly become sharers together of this work that it seemed natural to lighten my heart by talking freely to the "boys" and asking them to pray with me for the financial help we so needed. Some weeks after this as I opened the pile of mail that lay on my desk, I came to an envelope marked as coming from the warden's office. Laying other letters aside I hastened to open it, thinking it might be the news of some home-coming or other urgent business connected with one of our many friends. There were only a few words on the sheet of paper, but the enclosure proved to be a check for four hun-

dred and forty-seven dollars. This was the result of a collection taken up by the men among themselves, in token of their appreciation of and confidence in our work. This money represented a sacrifice the outside world can hardly compute, for it was spared from the small sums they had on deposit, which could furnish them with little comforts or necessities during the long years of prison life. To say how much comfort and strength my heart received from this thought and love so practically expressed, would be impossible through the poor medium of type and paper, but together with many subsequent signs, it made it possible for me to realize how truly the "boys" were with us. To have them in full accord with the work means more to me than would the plaudits of the public or the patronage of the wealthy.

As years have passed, many dear friends have been raised up to help us and they have done nobly. A large number have joined our Maintenance League, paying a given sum monthly or yearly, and some very helpful and generous donations have been received. Still the raising of the funds is our one dark cloud and appears our hardest problem. For five years past, this has forced me to spend much of my time on the lecture platform, earning money to meet the growing needs of the work. Fortunately through in-

heritance I am personally independent, so that my husband and I take no salary for our services, but even giving as I do all my earnings to the work, the fact remains that time thus spent is taken from my direct purpose and is a great expenditure of effort and strength sorely needed elsewhere.

When the Home was first started we laid down a few simple rules to guard and govern it. It should be borne in mind that it is not a home for criminals, it is a home for men who earnestly desire to do right. They come there because they have done with the old life, and our first condition is that those who come to Hope Hall must come direct from State Prison. This is to guard our family of earnest men from those who might come to Hope Hall as a last resort after spending their money in the old haunts. We drew no narrow lines of eligibility. The Catholic was to be as welcome as the Protestant, the Jew as the infidel. It was not necessary for a man to have been a member of our League, though of course we feel that the League can but prove a most helpful preparation for the Home. Another strict rule that the men have very deeply appreciated is the exclusion of the public. From the first, we wished the sacredness of their home privacy to be respected. All too long have these our friends been marked men, pointed out and

associated with their crimes and made to feel that they are the lawful prey of the morbidly curious. The rule was therefore made that no one who had not served at least one term in prison was to have admission to the Home. Very few of our most intimate friends have ever been there and they have been selected from among those who, having known the work within prison walls, were somewhat acquainted with the men. We have no public meetings at Hope Hall. The family prayers and Sunday services are often attended by men who have returned for an hour or two's visit. The testimonies given by such are most helpful and encouraging, but we do not believe in inviting the outside world to hear these one-time prisoners relate the history of their crimes.

Chancing to pick up a book the other day which dealt with the reaching of "the submerged," I found the following account. A worker amid these "under-world" scenes had smuggled in some wealthy and charitably inclined people and while his poorer guests were eating, he enlightened and entertained his rich acquaintances as follows: "This gentleman with the bullet head very closely cropped, returned home only forty-eight hours ago, after two years' absence for harboring mistaken notions of the privileges of uninvited guests who make stealthy and forcible en-

trance. This other gentleman with the foxy face and furtive eyes has the distinction of being the cleverest jewel thief in London. As with all children of genius his demon is at times too much for him. Would Mrs. ——— therefore look to her gems and precious stones? That slip of a girl in the back recently faced the law for pocket-picking and in the dock picked the pocket of the guardian who stood beside her, a pretty feat which gave rivals a thrill of envy. Yonder youth with the well anointed head and the fore-lock curled over his eye is the promising leader of a band of Hooligans. They could see the belt buckle gleam at his waist; that buckle has knocked three men senseless within ten days. The distinguished looking individual in the corner with the large aggressive jowl wore the broad arrow for ten years because of a sportive freak which an illiberal law construed as manslaughter, and the man next to him likewise with a striking countenance stood his trial on a capital charge and came off unscathed, though moral certainty was dead against him." Now all this may be very clever from the pen of a novelist and the speaking flippantly of crime and criminals may be looked upon as literary license. The book in all likelihood will never be read in the "underworld" where feelings would be outraged by such a travesty on charity, but when one comes

to the reality, what could be more ghastly than the treating of one's fellow-men as though they constituted some strange species to be studied, exhibited and joked about. On the other hand the harm is quite as grievous in allowing men to exploit in testimony before the public the evil deeds of the past. Let them say all they like about the love and mercy and power of the Christ, but let the evil, shameful past be buried in the grave of the long ago.

Having been in the past for years connected with a movement that encouraged the recital of such testimonies, I know of what I speak when I say that they are harmful, and that talking of wrong-doing is often the first step to feeling one can do it again. The shame and humiliation that should be felt are soon lost to those who talk much of what they have been, and a spirit of exaggeration and almost boastfulness takes its place.

No reporters have been permitted to visit Hope Hall. I was assured that the accounts I could thus secure of the work, would be most helpful and would give our Movement wide public recognition, if I would consent to waive this rule. On the other hand it would do incalculable harm in prison, making the men feel that the work was done more or less for the advertising of the Movement, and it would keep from

us the most self-respecting and earnest of the men. In this work the foremost thought has been and must always be the "boys." We view questions through their eyes, try to enter understandingly into their feelings and in so doing the work must be kept on lines that hold their approval and endorsement.

No discrimination as to crimes is made in the welcoming of our guests; that is a matter of the past. Sin is sin, and we do not ask if it has been little or big, when the sinner has repented. The number of terms served, the nationality or the color of the man make to us no more difference than their creed. All men who come straight from prison and need Hope Hall are eligible. When they have come, they are expected to behave as gentlemen. The rules are only such as would govern any well regulated family and are made for the protection of the men against those who might spoil the peace and comfort of the Home. We strongly urge silence regarding the past and as far as possible the forgetting of its sad memories. During the day all the men able to work are busy. We have no industries such as mat or broom making, which we feared would spoil the home aspect of the place, besides robbing the men of their ambition to strike out in work for themselves. They are employed in the work of the house; some are busy in the laundry,

some at painting, carpentering or building; others have the important position of cooks; still there is also the garden, farming and care of horse and cow to be remembered. The extension to our building with the twelve new rooms was built entirely by the men. When there is no building or farming to be done other occupations can easily be found.

In the evening they can gather in the music room to play games, of which we have a good supply, or to listen to the phonograph or amuse themselves with songs around the piano. We have already a rather nice library and those who wish to read or write quietly in the parlors can do so, while on summer nights the broad piazzas offer a quiet, cool and inviting resting-place. There is no regulation as to the length of stay of any man who comes to us. Some can obtain work much more readily than others. The able bodied laborer and skilled mechanic have the best chance; in spring time farm hands are in great demand, while the man who has never done honest work in his life before or the one who has been a bookkeeper or held some other position of trust are the ones most disqualified for the next new start in life. Many are well able and willing to work after a week or two weeks with us; others may need months to strengthen and nerve them for their life struggle. I was told by

those who foretold disappointment that I should have to deal with many men too lazy to work, who would come and stay at the Home as long as we would support them. This has not been my experience. On the contrary the difficulty has been to instill patience, so anxious are they to launch out for themselves and prove their sincerity.

I remember the case of a man who came to us in the early days. He had held a good paying position in the past before the yielding to temptations which gave him his term in prison, but of course that record was now against him. To work with pick and shovel, however anxious he was to do so, would have broken him down in a few days, for his health was wretched. During his stay with us his conduct was above reproach and his work in charge of our dining-room was most systematic and helpful. When he was graduated, it was to take the position of dish washer in a restaurant, which he filled faithfully for over a year. It meant long hours and small pay, yet he persevered and held the position. From this he went to a better place in the country. There the character given him helped him yet higher and now after six years he is in a fine position and is receiving good wages. He is married and is settled in a very comfortable little home. He feels that it was worth the year of dish-

washing to climb steadily to the position he now holds.

Not long since a man came to us who was a gentleman by education and training, a very bright and able fellow, whose fall had come by getting embroiled in corrupt politics and by extravagant, intemperate living. He thoroughly learned his lesson in prison, and showed the most earnest desire to start right in the new life. As no suitable position opened, his stay at the home had to be a long one, but each week saw a marked improvement in his character. Finding that the officer was in need of a man to take charge of the laundry, he volunteered and from early to late was as faithful over the wash tub and ironing-board as if they had been double entry or the balancing of office books. He graduated to a humble position in a big New York house where we confidently expect him to rise by his hard work and ability. Though his salary is as yet small, he writes to us letters full of contentment and gratitude, showing in every way that the new spirit has entered into him, proving clearly that he realizes that life is a thing that must be made, not merely spent.

To many the Home brings back sweet memories of a past long lost to them, but perhaps those to whom it means the most, are those who have never had much of a home to remember.

It is to them a revelation, and it is wonderful to watch the development in disposition and character that takes place under the new experience. My secretary was driving away from Hope Hall after one of the evening gatherings, and as the carriage turned out of the driveway into the road, there was a pause that she might look back at the brightly lighted windows gleaming hospitably through the shade-trees which so prettily surround it. After a long look the man who was driving turned and said, "Ah! you don't know what this means to us 'boys'; the Little Mother does not, well as she understands us. No one can know but an old-timer. I tell you when you have never had a place in all your life to call home, it means something to pass through these gates and say, 'This is *my* home,' to go into a room at night and feel, 'This is *my* room,' to lie down on a bed of which you can say, 'This is *my* bed.'" Then, as they drove on, he spoke of his past, and coming to the last imprisonment, which in his case was, I believe, five or six years, he added: "When the Little Mother came, I used to go into the chapel and listen with the other 'boys.' I liked to hear her talk, and I respected the men who joined the League, but I did not think of joining or becoming a Christian. I felt religion wasn't in my line. One day, however, she said, 'Boys, I've got a home for you.'

That is what first made me think. I said to myself, 'Here is a woman who thinks enough of me to offer me a home, something I never had before, and if she cares that much, it is time I began to care a little myself.' So I began from that day to try and get ready for my home. When the day of liberty came, the officer on my gang said, 'I shall keep your job for you, for we expect you back before three months are out.' And no wonder he said it, for I had never been able to keep out that long before; but this time I knew it would be different."

A fine tall fellow walked into my office years ago, and the greeting that he would have spoken died on his trembling lips. He could only hold my hand in his, and battle with the tears that unnerved him. When he had taken his seat by my desk, and I had told him how glad I was over his home-coming, he said, "Little Mother, I don't know what I should do, were it not for Hope Hall to-day. I am so confused and bewildered by the rush of the great city. So strange to outside life I feel as helpless as a new-born child." Truly he was unnerved. The trembling hand, the nervous start at every sound, the stammering tongue all told the tale too painfully for any mistake. He was not naturally a nervous, emotional man. There was nothing weak or cowardly about him. I was told by companions who had known

him that he was a most desperate criminal; nothing thwarted him in his past deeds, even if he had to force his point with the threatening muzzle of a revolver. He was a man of education, could speak and write several languages, was a thorough musician and had much talent and ability in other lines, but he had misused his gifts and had become a notoriously successful forger. Though for years an infidel he had proved himself an earnest Christian as a member of our League and naturally he turned to us after an experience of fifteen years within the walls. The prison from which he came was one from which no part of the surrounding town can be seen. The high walls and close confinement bury the men absolutely from the world they have left. From years of service, he was turned out to face life with but one dollar as capital with which to start in honest living. In his case the warden supplemented the bill with five dollars from his own pocket, which however the man lost in his confusion and hurry at the station. I am glad to add that when I brought the matter to the notice of the governor, and told him that our prisoners were being sent forth into the world in that state, with absolutely no means between them and starvation, he saw to it that better provision was made for them; but even where five or ten dollars is given, it is a very slender barrier between the one-time criminal and

the temptations of the old life. The money is soon spent for food, lodging and car fare hither and thither, as they seek work, and what then can they do if they do not find employment? In many stores and factories the men are not paid until the end of the second week after obtaining employment, and during those two weeks while working, they must have money for food and lodging. The man of whom I have just spoken went to Hope Hall and remained there until he was thoroughly able to cope with life. He has since held a position of trust where he had the control of many men and the oversight of responsible work. He won the confidence of all who knew him in the town where he settled. They backed him in starting in business for himself and he is now married and happily settled in life. The prison experience is six years away in the shadow of the sad almost forgotten past.

Not long since, the chaplain of Charlestown, Massachusetts, wrote me of a man whom he very much wanted me to help. He said he believed the authorities would give this man a chance in liberty, if there was some one to vouch for him. He believed that the man was sincere and earnest in his desire to do right. He further stated that the Board whose duty it was to look into the cases of men who might be paroled had

expressed their willingness to turn him over to me, if I were disposed to try him and give him a chance. Though only forty-six years of age, this man had spent thirty-one years in prison, counting a juvenile reformatory as the first place of incarceration. The last sentence was for thirty years under the Habitual Criminal Act. We wrote at once offering to take him to Hope Hall and the authorities gave him over to us, thus saving him twelve weary years he would otherwise have had to serve. He was unnerved and strangely restless when he first arrived. The hammock in the sunshine seemed the best place to put him that first day. In six weeks he was a new man, physically and mentally; he had gained fifteen pounds in weight and when I came across him down on his knees weeding the flower-beds, the face that looked up into mine was brown with summer tan and bright with new hope and courage. It could be truly said of this man that he had never had a chance. When his mother died, he told the chaplain he wished he could weep. He wished there was one thing in her life that could be a sweet memory, something he could think of as done for his good, but there was not one bright spot. Mother, father, sister and brother are buried in drunkards' graves and the same curse so wrecked and ruined his life that in the past he thought

there was never to be any escape for him. How much Hope Hall with its fresh air, quiet surroundings, good food and cheery companionship mean to such a man only the men themselves can understand.

It is difficult in a work of this kind to chronicle its growth. To us who have been in the midst of it, the development and improvement, advance and victory are very evident, but it would need a carefully-kept journal of many volumes to impart its history to others.

The old farmhouse on Long Island has been altered and enlarged. Old walls and ceilings have been torn down to be replaced by new plaster and paint. The new wing has given us a longer dining-room for our increased family, new kitchens, laundry and storeroom, with overhead a number of new bedrooms. The farm which was somewhat of a wilderness has been put under cultivation; fruit trees, rose-bushes, vines and shrubs added each spring and fall. Each addition means much to us, far more than if we had had large capital to expend. This Home is not only for the "boys" of New York State, but for all the Eastern prisons. They come to us as readily from Charlestown and Trenton as from Sing Sing. Even the prisons we have not visited send to us some, who through the reading

of the *Gazette* have come to realize that they too are welcome.

The Western Home in Chicago has meanwhile been doing a splendid work for the "boys" from Joliet and the middle Western prisons. There we have men mostly on parole; men who would have no chance of getting their parole were it not that we are willing to be sponsors for them. We find them work, keep in touch with them month by month, and report to the prison, until we have the pleasure of handing them their final discharge papers.

The third Hope Hall is in Iowa, and has been founded and given to the "boys" of that state by our dear friend and co-laborer, Hon. L. S. Coffin. Mr. Coffin was one of the pioneers of the state and a large land owner. For a lifetime he has been earnest in temperance work and has proved himself especially the friend of the railroad men. Sometime since, his heart went out to the "boys" in prison. He met and talked with me about the work and expressed his longing to see a Hope Hall opened for them in his state. Being convinced of the wisdom and success of the Hope Hall scheme he came to New York to study our Home. Going back to Iowa he dedicated the choicest piece of his own farm to this purpose and built upon it, at a cost of over ten thousand dollars, a beautiful home.

I went on for the opening of Hope Hall number three and shall never forget the scene. Judges, lawyers, ministers and farmers, the warden and chaplain of State Prison and the members of the Prison Board of Control were all present, and in their midst an old man of over eighty whose face shone with joy, and whose voice trembled with emotion, as he realized that the day for which he had worked so faithfully single-handed had come at last. When our League work was started in Iowa, we enrolled Father Coffin (as he is lovingly called) as a member of the League, giving him its oversight for that state. When we think of his energy and devotion at his advanced age; of the new and heavy responsibilities he has shouldered in facing this great problem, we can but feel that he sets a valiant example that others will follow some day in the many other states where there is a similar need.

Statistics are not of very great interest, for they often fail to convey anything like an idea of the work accomplished. They are of course added to as months pass by, so that while the printers are at work, they have materially changed. We can say briefly, however, that of those who have come to our two Hope Halls (Hope Hall number three is only just opened), seventy-five per cent. have done well; twenty per cent. may

be all right, and are often found to be so after we have apparently lost track of them; five per cent. have perhaps returned to prison. Over three thousand have passed through the two Homes. This of course does not speak of the many hundreds who were once League members and are to-day doing well all over the country, who did not need the shelter and help of Hope Hall.

The real loving pride the "boys" feel for their home has been to me very touching. Often when a man comes to say "good-bye" he can hardly do so for the tears that make his voice unsteady, and the first letters are full of home-sick longing for the place that has so truly become "home, sweet home."

For the graduates who are working within reach, it is possible to run "home" for a visit on holidays, and then many happy reunions take place. On the occasion of our seventh anniversary, over seventy sat down to supper together. It had been a very bright sunny day and the grounds represented a pretty picture. The teams composed of Home "boys" and graduates were playing each other on the baseball ground; little children whose fathers had been given back to them played in the shade of the big trees; wives who had come to see the much talked of starting place that had made all life different to

their dear ones, walked about the farm or listened to the music on the broad piazza and from each glad face and each cheery voice came the same expression of unutterable thankfulness for what God had accomplished.

## VIII

### THE SAME STORY FROM OTHER PENS

The idea of this book has been to show the subject as far as possible from the standpoint of the cell. My life has become closely enough linked with those in prison to see and feel, to know and understand the problem from their view-point. I have tried to speak for them. Now I will let them speak for themselves, that the touch may be closer and more direct than it could be through the medium of my thought and pen.

The following letter was written to the editor of our *Volunteer Gazette* in the early days of the work, by one who had fought his own way out of difficulty, but who knew well the hard path that his one-time companions still had to tread.

"Dear Mr. Editor: I have been reading much lately in your paper, and also in the daily papers about the 'Little Mother's' work in providing a home for the fellow just out of prison. I am very glad indeed that such a work is being carried forward, for if ever there existed a class of men who need looking after it is the ex-prisoner. I recently attended one of Mrs. Booth's meetings and was deeply impressed as she made

plain to her audience the great need of 'her boys.' It is very probable that I was all the more interested in view of the fact that I, many years ago, was sentenced to a term of eighteen months in the ——— Penitentiary and to-day, after the lapse of years, I very vividly recall the utter friendlessness that was my lot at that time.

"The prison was one in which the prisoners were compelled to observe the rule of silence; and my sentence carried with it also the requirements of hard labor. No person can realize fully the meaning of such a sentence except he pass through it. To sit at a work bench day after day touching elbows with your fellows, not daring to say a word becomes exquisite torture as the months pass slowly by.

"I understand that the Little Mother not only looks after the 'boys' when they come out of prison, but takes to them a gospel of love and light and peace. I do not want to disparage the work done by other Christian workers. God bless them; they mean well, but some of them fail to grasp the fact that what we wanted to hear were words of love and sympathy.

"But what I want to bring out in this is the decided contrast between coming out of prison years ago and coming out now.

"The majority of the men confined in that prison had no hope of being met at the prison

door by a friend or a relative when the day of their discharge arrived, and I was one of that number. When my sentence had expired, I was given a suit of clothes and a small sum of money, and was told I was free. So I reentered the world. Free; but where could I go? My first thought was to find employment. Need I tell you of that weary search? I could furnish no recommendations. The prison pallor showed all too plainly on my face. The shuffle of the lock-step still clinging to me, with the instinctive folding of my arms when spoken to, told plainer than words where I had last been employed.

"After many days I secured work only to be dismissed when my employer was warned by a detective that he was employing an ex-convict.

"Then, at last discouraged, I joined that great army of men, known as tramps, and for a time I wandered over the country, living an aimless, hopeless life. That I am not now a tramp is due to my having been saved by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

"So much for my experience as an ex-prisoner; but if reports be true, and if the stories told me by former associates in crime are to be believed, there has in the past four years been a very great change in the attitude of the world towards the ex-prisoner. A new sentiment has been formed and where, in my case, practically

no hands were held out to help; now the world stands ready to help the ex-prisoner, who really desires to live an honest life once more.

"Years ago no door was open as a home for the ex-prisoner. To-day Mrs. Booth's three Hope Halls are spoken of all over this country of ours where the prison-weary men may find rest. Indeed I have met and talked with several of the V. P. L. men and all spoke of 'Home' in the most endearing terms. I am glad this is the condition of to-day. The vast majority of men in prison really desire to live honest lives again. But they need a champion who will help them in their new-made resolution, one who will aid them, while in prison to be true to God and themselves. One who will meet them at the prison gate upon their discharge and take them home. One who will stand between them and the frown and censure of a world which forgets that they have already been fully punished for their misdeeds. One who will aid them in finding honest employment and to whom they can always turn for help and counsel. This has in the past been the problem the prisoners had to solve. To-day it is no longer a problem.

"And yet it seems to me that the work Mrs. Booth has undertaken is still in its infancy. There are still prisons that are unreached. The serious, thinking world has recognized in this

work the true solution of this mighty problem, and is grandly rallying to its support.

"I believe the day is fast approaching when every state shall have its Hope Hall and no man shall step out of state prison but that he shall find in one of them a way of escape from the temptations of crime. God hasten the day."

The next message comes from the pen of one who can truly be said to have gone through the bitterness and darkness of prison experience. In the old days, when prisons were hard, he suffered for days and nights in the dungeon. He went through the days of shame and sorrow to those of bitterness and cynicism and after his conversion, when liberty became his, he knew what it was to take up the hardest, most menial work and do it faithfully and patiently that he might regain the confidence that the life of wrong-doing had lost him. To-day these hands that have been unshackled are stretched out lovingly to help others and he goes as a messenger to homes that are bereaved and saddened, to bring practical help to the little ones of our "boys" in prison.

Speaking to me of that cry in prison which he mentions so graphically, he said, "But what is the use to write about it. The people will not understand. What we have felt and been through in prison is a foreign language to them."

Then he told me more in detail how he had often lain awake in the great still gloomy building where over a thousand men are locked away in their narrow little cells. Suddenly in the darkness and stillness of night, an awful unearthly shriek will ring out through the galleries—a cry that will make the strongest man tremble. Never in his life elsewhere has he heard anything so heart-rending and blood-curdling. He speaks of it as the cry of a soul awake in its anguish, though the weary body may be in the torpor of sleep.

"If you ask me what the V. P. L. means I should say that it is an inspiration to self-help with Christ as our anchor.

"The need, the crying necessity of this work can only be entirely known to the man who has been made over by the grace of God through the influence of this unique and wonderful work. The vaporings of alleged scientists have been taken with all seriousness by some, in derision by others, according to the ideas of the individuals, who, placing themselves in the position of the unfortunates under discussion, tried themselves and found a true bill or not according to their faith in themselves. From the adverse reports it is needless to say that these self-appointed censors of humanity had a very poor opinion of themselves and had entirely omitted

God Almighty from the problem. The people of the world at large who were not scientific, put down the man behind the bars as 'no good' and dismissed the subject with indifference, so that the unfortunate found himself between the scientist and the world very much in the position of the man who fell among thieves, and who in a most desperate condition and sorely needing help, has been passed by on the other side by the priest and the Levite. They took a look at him, examined him and passed along. What the Good Samaritan means only the subject of the rescue can know. It is from that point of view I speak.

"The real punishment of the prisoner commences after the liberty he has so longed for comes. The day he looked forward to arrives, he steps out into the world a man, alone in the crowd, marked, branded, not entirely alone for he has chained to him a corpse, his dead past. At the time that success seems almost in his grasp his past arises, like an evil spirit and drags him down in the mire again. So he drifts back to his only home, the prison. The glamour of his life of crime, the follies of youth, give way to cynicism, a feeling of kismet arises that excuses his failures as being part of a fate that could not be evaded. Gladly would the man escape the wretched past and the inevitable future. Sometimes he tries,

every time with less success. The past always arises. Then his physical condition is gradually changed, in many cases the habit of drugs, of opium especially has been acquired. It makes a man forget—he needs to forget by now! Again so-called liberty comes. Where can he go? A few dollars in his pocket, a cheap suit of clothes on his back, every one seems to point the finger at him. The saloon is always open, the woman with the painted face meets him, a few old chums are there, and he is welcomed back to Hell. Perhaps he is successful, turns a few good 'tricks,' puts his 'fall money' away (money to defend him in case he is arrested and also to square himself with the police) but sooner or later it is the old story,—back again to prison, a matter of course by now—but he will be more careful next time. Sometimes he thinks of the better days of long ago—it won't do, he closes the door with a snap—he hates himself, he hates the world, and if you were on the inside in the dead of night, you too would sometimes hear that awful cry of the tortured soul—that involuntary wail that makes even the night watch shrink—the soul crying against its murder while the body sleeps. Underneath all is that yearning for a better life. We get sometimes almost on the edge of the pit only to slip back farther into the abyss than before.

"You, who have lived in the beautiful country of home and loved ones, have never heard that awful cry and you never want to, for, if you did, you could never forget it.

"The men that the V. P. L. appeals to more than any others are those who are men of determined and positive natures, those who are no longer novices in crime. Strange as it may appear, these men, if you know them and have their confidence, will tell you that their life is a mistake, but that there is no escape. They are chained to the work. If a strong man can be faced about, he is just as potent for good as he once was for evil. The only way to get good out of a 'given-up' man is by the love of God, and it must be brought to him by his fellow-creatures as messengers, but, when he asks for bread, don't give him a stone. Your man behind the bars is suspicious. It is not a wonder that he is, when he is approached on the subject of help. He naturally wonders where the 'graft' comes in.

"Now this is what the V. P. L. does. When the leaders and officers of this glorious work step forward to speak to the 'boys' they know they are not in the position of 'the hired man,' that there is no 'graft' in it, that their lives are lives of sacrifice. They talk of the love of God to the men and they prove it. If you want to impress

the men behind the bars, you *must* prove it—make it real, also talk straight. Don't tell them that they should not be in prison,—they know better; don't get sentimental and weep over them, for they don't want that. The Little Mother tells them 'I don't come here to prevent you from paying the just penalty of your crimes; take your medicine like men. You know what is right, do it *now*. When you have paid the penalty, I will help you. I will nurse you back to health, I will get you work, above all, I will trust you and it depends upon you whether I keep on doing so or not. Mind, I will help you over rough places, but I won't carry you. If any of you have little ones, wives or mothers, I will help them, and as long as you are true and faithful, I will help you.' 'What then?' you ask. Well the Little Mother makes good her promise, she does all this and more. In extending her invitation to the country of the good Hope she says, 'I want you all to come. I don't care what your religion is or what your color is. All I ask is that you turn away from the old life.'

"Starving wives and little children are fed and clothed. No man in state prison ever applied for aid for his suffering loved ones in vain. When you save a man's loved ones from a fate often worse than death, he does not doubt your

sincerity, when you give instead of take all the time, he believes you.

"Then he comes out of prison broken down with the nervous strain—the nights of anguish—his confidence in himself is gone. Nothing but the old life of Hell in front of him, a branded man, but the doors of Hope Halls are open! 'WELCOME' is on the door-step. Does he find some ill-smelling building with whitewashed walls that remind him of the place he has just left, abundance of advice and nothing to eat? Not at all! He enters a beautiful Home such as any gentleman in the land might be proud of, institutionalism is lacking—Home and loving sympathy greet him, dainty rooms with whitest of sheets upon nattiest of beds, an air of comfort and repose, beautiful grounds, kindness and helpfulness on every hand. Hope has its resting-place here. On the walls of one of the restful rooms in an illuminated text are these words, 'Christ is the head of this House, the unseen listener to every conversation.'

"The one who has saved the babies and the mothers is equally successful with the man who comes Home. Every man is on honor. The farm and household duties, the care of the beautiful grounds give enough exercise to occupy the time though there is no particular task. Each one is interested in his Home. After the day is

over there is the large library, music, games, etc. As the days go by, the man broken down by long imprisonment improves in body and mind. The living in God's sunshine helps body and soul. The terrible nervousness gives place to confidence, the prison pallor goes gradually, the good that has been sown brings forth fruit, the door is shut upon the past—tided over at the critical point—our comrade, ruddy in health and strong in spirit, is placed in a position. His past is known to one man—his employer. How different from all past attempts! No one can throw him down so long as he does well. The one who hires him will defend him and the Little Mother is his friend, and his comrades cheer him on.

"The story I've told is the same one three thousand made-over men can tell to-day. The V. P. L. has long since left the realms of theory for the stronghold of facts. The finest sermon preached in a man's life, the touchstone of our League is this, "If a man is right, he will do right.'"

I must not forget the life-men in prison. If it were only for them, it would be well worth while to have our League established, that on their horizon otherwise so dark and gloomy, might be seen some breaking of the dawn that shall bring to them a brighter, sweeter life, when the full

penalty has been paid and they pass into a world where the sweetest and fullest of liberty shall be theirs.

One of these life-men writes as follows:—"Dear Little Mother:—Nobody knows better than I do myself what the League has done for me and the men here. I have been in prison over twenty years, and know what I am talking about. Without it prison would be much like what it was before. I hope that with all the disappointments you are bound to meet with, you will continue to believe that there are hundreds of men in our great prisons who are in earnest. Most respectfully yours, No. 19595."

The following is written by one of our graduates who was for some years a member of the V. P. L. He did not himself need the shelter of Hope Hall, but he knew well what the Home was to those who were homeless. He is now a successful business man, has a happy home of his own and is a leader in the church to which he belongs, being the superintendent of the Sunday-school and much interested in all the active work of that little community.

"Dear Little Mother:—Word has reached me that you are completing a book telling the glorious story of the Volunteer Prison League and I am led to write you this expression of my joy that there is thus to be given to the world, some-

thing of the truth which you so well know of the real heart of the prisoner-man. Not only this, but after the passage of more than three years since I left prison, I want to bear this renewed testimony to you of the penetrating, permeating and abiding power of our loved League, to give and to hold hope and faith in the souls of disheartened, sinful, but contrite men.

"No good which has come to me in these prospering days of freedom, and no gladness which still unlived years may have in store for me, can ever dim in my grateful heart, the memory of what this League has done for me, and what I have seen it do for others in leading us out of despondency, imbuing us with courage, giving us strength to stand erect and in guiding us back to Christ and to God.

"Only those who have been face to face with the conditions of prison life, who know its revolting influences, who have daily breathed its debasing atmosphere, who have felt its contaminating touch, to whom has come the ever deepening sense of social degradation and of the repellent stigma placed indelibly upon them by their prison term can realize what the League means. They whose quickened consciences have scourged them unto the wish and the will to retrieve the sinful past, only to be hurled back into deeper disheartenment and desperation by the popular

prejudice which questions their ability and almost denies them the rights to restoration, can fully appreciate the moral uplifting and incentive which this League gives. No words can express the tortures of the first awful days in prison. The isolation, the remorse, the heart-hardening power of stern discipline which regulates diet and toil, waking and sleeping and which sharply limits free-will and free-act; the dread consciousness that you are henceforth to be classed among social outcasts and forever mistrusted and distrusted are all part of an unspeakable whole. The association with the multitude of like conditioned men whose lengthened terms of confinement, and whose repeated convictions perhaps have given them a fixed sense of indifference to what happens to themselves and what they bring to pass upon others, and from whose forbidding experience you learn the awful truth of the fate which confronts you as a convicted man, and from which they insist there is no sure escape, however sincere and earnest the purpose and the striving, soon makes most prisoners hopeless, and many of them heartless. Is it any wonder?

"Such was the atmosphere and such the invariable impression and effect of prison life when I was justly condemned and confined. I found men all about me longing for a fair new chance to live aright, but impregnated with the doctrine

that there was now no hope for them to do so. There were men of all types and all classes of social condition. Men serving their first term and others serving their second, third—or fourth—who in the confidence and candor of our mutual misery and degradation often told me (for we do communicate readily in prison, you know) that their supreme desire was for a return to decent citizenship, that they wanted to be 'straight' but that there was no chance for them to be so for *no one would trust them.*

"I was amazed to find among the most 'hardened' of my fellow-prisoners this controlling soul-thirst for confidence, for faith, and for trust. There was practically no rebellion against physical features of imprisonment and of prison discipline, there was no protest against the severity of the material pains and penalties of our punishment, but we yearned mightily for unselfish brotherly love and treasured to a degree unknown to those to whom it has never been denied, such fractions thereof as we received from each other. What was needed and all that was needed to give us the true impetus, the sufficient incentive, the conquering power to adjust ourselves anew and to set our lives in the right way for future freedom, was some agency which by stimulating unselfish love among ourselves and showing us that we were likewise loved by Christly men and

women outside the prison walls, should inspire us to then and there have faith in God, to then and there have faith in our fellow-men and to then and there live loyally to the truth and the law.

"This agency came to us in the organization of this League in our prisons. Adherence to its principles quickened us to newness of life, gave us confidence in ourselves and others and taught us definitely and unequivocally that it is that which is wrought within a man, and not that which is wrought upon a man, that makes a man, and determines what he is, irrespective of where he is. When he had learned that truth we were all right. From that hour the fact of our conviction lost its sovereign sway, our imprisonment was seen to be a new beginning and not the final ending of our social careers and the future glowed brightly for us with hopes sure to be realized if only we remained steadfast.

"And we are remaining steadfast, Little Mother, hundreds of us, and by God's grace we will hold true to the end, and it is because this League has so thoroughly imbedded its truths in our hearts and is thereby daily shaping our lives, that so many of us are conquering in prison and out of prison and that we so revere you and love it.

"The crowning factor in the work of the League beyond prison walls, and the one feature which fulfills its promise of continuing love and health

until each discharged man is so conditioned that he needs such help no longer, is Hope Hall. I did not have occasion to go there except as a guest on Anniversary Day, but I tell you what I know of its value to those who have no place else to go except the street, the den and the dive.

"The average man in stripes, when he is freed of the law, has no spot he can feel or know as his home. There is no available resting-place where he can abide with cordial welcome and with provision made for his every need during the weeks or months when he is regathering his physical and mental powers, more or less shattered by his years in confinement and sorrow, and until he finds the steady employment that will give him the means of self-support.

"To such men this haven afforded by Hope Hall is a veritable salvation for body and soul. Scores have shown me how their repeated convictions were brought about by the fact that they were homeless and friendless, except for evil associates, and in dire need after their former imprisonment and they cursed conditions that made them convicts again and again.

"I have seen these same men, awakened to the truth that Hope Hall was theirs and for them and them alone, shed tears of appreciation as they spoke of their finding shelter when they were again free and thus avoiding the possibility

of a return to evil ways. I have seen some of these men, who later graduated from this home into useful lives, wholly redeemed by its final service to them, without which the previous work in their souls would have been wasted.

"There is no power quite so strong upon the human heart as that which centres about one's home and it is because these otherwise homeless men have come to look upon it and to call our Hope Hall their home and who love it accordingly, that they there find the calm, the comforting and the safety they require to make them wholly sound in body and soul and they can afterwards go into other homes they themselves establish strong to endure and overcome.

"God bless you and our League and make you both the means and the power unto salvation of thousands more of the men among whom I am now forever numbered, until the whole world shall recognize the regnant truth that men in stripes are also the loved children of God, and are both subdued and energized by the same Divine power which moves upon the souls of other men and with like results."

The next opinion is from a talented and educated man, who has thoughtfully and dispassionately written of what he has seen during the past six years as an inmate of the prison where our League started.

"In making an estimate of the influence and value of the Volunteer Prison League in prison, based upon favorable opportunities for observation, I should say that its appeal at first was in its promise of material aid, and its spiritual influences came after. When Mrs. Booth came to Sing Sing, the men were unprepared for the ringing message that she brought them and for her promises of substantial aid. At first, they didn't believe it. It was too good to be true, and she might have prayed and preached to them till Doomsday, without securing anything more than passing attention, had she not coupled her plea for spiritual reform with an offer of help of the most practical kind. Their interest was aroused and when these offers took real form and man after man went to Hope Hall, got help and employment, she gained admission to their hearts and confidence and the field was ready for the spiritual effort which has, I believe, been successfully made.

"These results are not altogether based upon gratitude, nor are they merely emotional, but in many cases they are real and permanent. There are scores of prisoners in Sing Sing who are making sincere efforts to lead pure, Christian lives and who are supported in their aspirations by the work of the League. These men are the most hopeful subjects of permanent reform, but

there are also many others who are moved by the influences of the League, attracted by the decencies and respectability that it offers and by its material support, who are also genuinely in earnest and furnish many cases of the restoration of hitherto hopeless men returning to society as useful members. The spiritual influence is not so active with them, but they acknowledge that such influences do exist and their attitude is respectful to them, whereas before the establishment of the League they were contemptuous and scornful. This is hopeful material to work upon, and from it Mrs. Booth will undoubtedly gather a large number of complete converts.

"It is a fact that in the past the men were not only apathetic and indifferent to religious teachings, but they entertained a positive aversion to them. That is largely changed. It is still true with a considerable number, but even with them the truculence has passed away and the attitude of the whole community is at least respectful and with a majority, appreciative of the League's work. I saw both conditions during my six years' imprisonment and the change is marked in a hundred ways. When the League button was first worn by a few men, they were the subjects of open scorn by their fellow-prisoners. Now the button is worn by a large majority of the prisoners with pride, and no one of those who do

not wear it ever thinks of making a slurring or adverse comment upon them. At first, it was frequently said, in that free spirit of criticism that prevails among prisoners, 'Oh, yes, Mrs. Booth is in it for what it will bring, like the rest.' Now it would be dangerous for a man to make such a remark openly. He would be called to prompt account for his insulting speech. In fact, such things are not said any more.

"The members of the League, on joining, make a promise to abstain from obscene language and profanity. The effect of this principle in the constitution of the League is perhaps more apparent than any other. Oaths are less frequently heard and vile speech is far less common. It has become bad form to swear, and clean conversation is supplanting the ribald talk that prevailed among the men before the League's influence manifested itself.

"The verdict of the prisoners upon the work of the League is unanimous that it is the only real and practical scheme of help that has ever been extended to them. There is no varying opinion about its effectiveness. They recognize its value. It has opened the way for hundreds of wretched men who turned from the contemplation of their future with despair, but who now regard it with hope. The stories that come back from Hope Hall, and from the many men who have secured

employment and who are leading clean and useful lives, have passed from lip to lip, and every one gives new encouragement and supports new resolutions of reform.

"Mrs. Booth's and Mrs. McAlpin's friendship has had another influence upon the prisons, an indirect one it is true, but one of great significance for the prisoner. It is useless to deny that the discipline of prisons has been marked at times by cruelty and tyranny. Such conditions are responding to a progressive spirit, and a factor in that movement is the fact that these victims of the old abuses are no longer friendless. They are able to make a complaint, and they understand that their welfare will be guarded by those capable of protecting it. The work on these lines is subjective but potent. Similarly, the discipline has been helped by the organization. The officials recognize that fact. Men are more biddable, officers, less arrogant. The prisoner and keeper have become more considerate of each other. There has been a vast change and improvement in every way. The prisoner, having found a real incentive, is seeking to lift himself up, and as he shows himself worthy of aid by those entrusted with the control of his actions, they are encouraged to help him. How far these good influences may extend, I am unable to say. It may be that they will even reach a solution of the problems pre-

sented by crime, but if they do not go so far, they are working with the cordial, grateful, earnest coöperation of the prisoners themselves, without which all efforts would be vain."

## IX

### LIFE STORIES

How strong and vivid an impression some pictures can make upon the mind, photographed there in colors so striking or so appealing to the soul, that all through life they come back to memory again and again as clear and sharp in every detail as the day we first gazed upon them! Perhaps it was the wondrous work of some master hand that stood out for us as the one picture in a gallery of treasures. It may have been a face that gazed at us from the shadowy corner of an old cathedral through which the very thought and soul of the painter met our own, and left with us the meaning that he strove to teach through form and color. That which lives the longest may perchance be a crude picture that hung on the nursery wall, weaving itself into our childish life, and wearing for us a different aspect when we were good or naughty. The firelight played mysteriously about it as we dozed off to sleep, and then perhaps it took life and mingled with our childish dreams. If we are lovers of nature, the brightest, most living pictures in memory's gallery may have come to us amid the whisper of leaves and the play of sunbeams.

Some little glade where the shadows wavered on ferns and moss, or the tiny streamlet whose pearly waters caught the sunbeams and glittered like gems amid the lace work of the leaves. The photograph was taken by the eye and brain long years ago, but we have seen the picture again and again. When the earth has been hard and cold in the icy grip of winter, as we have travelled over the thirsty desert, or when counting the weary hours in the dark room where fever held us, it has come back so clearly that we have almost heard the laughter of the water and the rustle of the leaves. I wish instead of trying to paint with words, I could use the pencil and brush of a master hand to show a picture that made just such an impression on my mind, and that, if seen by others, would bring to them without words the thought, the truth of which no argument could gainsay.

It was a brilliant May morning, such a day as sets the birds singing and drapes the apple-trees with masses of pink and white. The sky was a vivid blue and great piles of cotton-wool cloud floated leisurely across the distance as if to show up the tender reds and greens of the foliage. The glory of the day without made the contrast greater as I stepped within the walls of one of our oldest and gloomiest state prisons. As the great iron door shut behind me, gone were the

sunshine, the breezes, the gladness and song of the spring, for sorrow and sighs seemed to lurk in the dark corners. A few minutes later, I found myself on the chapel platform, looking down on an audience garbed in the dreary striped uniform that was in itself enough to add gloom to the sombreness of prison walls and high barred windows. The room was so built that not much of the brightness of out-of-doors penetrated it and the contrast between the country through which I had passed, and this sunless place was very striking. As the opening exercises proceeded, I studied my audience. An audience means much to the speaker, and especially is this true of one in State Prison. There were some whom I had known for several years and the smile of recognition meant much to them; others had come since my last visit, and I needed to know them that I might learn to reach their hearts with the message. Of these newcomers, some were mere boys whose heads were bowed in shame; others showed a bitter and defiant front and appeared to be flinging out a challenge to any who might dare approach the portal of their imprisoned soul.

It was while engaged in this study of faces that I saw the picture of which I would speak. In the roof of the chapel was a small sky-light, and through it the sun sent down one bright

clear shaft of yellow glory. It shone on one man, making his face and figure stand out distinctly amid the gloom that surrounded him. Looking at the face, I saw at once that his was the type the criminologists would pick out as a hardened offender. There was the stern jaw, the deep-set dark eyes, on his face the lines that rough life had given and the prison pallor that told of long years within the walls, made all the more noticeable by the mass of black hair that fell low on his brow. There was much of past suffering to be read in that face, but now utterly forgetful of his surroundings, he had thrown his head back and was looking straight up into the glory of the sunshine. The mouth that might have been stern and cynical was smiling, and as I looked the dark eyes were softened with a mist of tears, and then as they overflowed, the sunlight shone and glistened upon them as they coursed their way down his face. These were the words he was singing, and the whole expression of that face told that they came not from the lips alone, but from a heart that knew that of which it sang:

> "My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
> For Thee all the follies of sin I resign,
> My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou,
> If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."

Could I have caught the spirit of the picture and

shown that face in the sunlight with the soul's door thrown open, with the convict garb amid the setting of gloomy shadows, and had I had the power to make it live on canvas I would have hung it where the passing world could read its story. No need to write beneath it! Could they have seen it as I saw it, they would have turned away to say, "So there *is* hope for the convict." Hope! Yes, indeed! That is what I am reading day by day in the life experiences of our "boys" in prison. That is the message that is being sent back in louder, more certain tones from the lives of thousands who have stood the test of liberty. In a work like ours, the happy, hopeful side is what gives us courage to face the hard, stern difficulties that cannot be slighted or forgotten, but must from their very urgency be faced and combated. It is the flesh and blood facts, not the theories, that will prove to the world the redeemability of those who have gone far astray, and it is this very evidence that I wish to bring forward.

One hot summer day in 1896, shortly after the opening of our work in prison, and before Hope Hall was in existence, a caller came to my office who bore in face and manner the most unmistakable brand of State Prison. My secretary was the first to greet him, but she almost immediately came to my private office, and in her hands she

carried a sand bag, a revolver and a handful of cartridges. "He has come to give you these," she said, and so I called him in at once to tell me his story. He was a tall, stoop-shouldered fellow, whose whole figure spoke of dejection and a broken spirit. His face had the distrustful, hunted look that speaks of years of experience with every man's hand against one. After I had welcomed him and tried to make him feel how truly glad I was that he had turned to us in his extremity, I drew him on to talk of himself. The feverishness of the hand, that had clasped mine, the unnatural brightness of the sunken eyes, and the pain with which his face was drawn made his tale all the more pathetic. When our work was opened in Sing Sing, he had refused to leave his cell to attend the service. He was an old-time prisoner, having been in prison several times and he had reached the point where his heart was hardened against everything. He had absolutely given up faith in religion. Though he had never heard us speak, he received something of the message from the other men. Sitting alone in his cell during the last few weeks of his incarceration, he thought seriously over the utter failure of his life. He was thoroughly tired of prison, there was no doubt of that, but could there be any other life for him? Something that I had said concerning

my faith and hope for the "old-timer" came as an encouragement in this hour of decision, and he finally determined to have done with the crooked life and to give honest living one good, fair trial.

On leaving prison he did not come to our Headquarters; he had never met us and did not feel that he had any claim, so he faced his problem alone and sought to find work for himself. Though a tall, large-boned man, he was far from strong, for long terms in prison had told upon him and the seeds of that wretched "prison consumption" that used to be so prevalent in Sing Sing, had already found fertile soil in his lungs. The first weeks represented weary hours of tramping back and forth through the city asking for work, only to meet the same disappointment everywhere. At last he found a job on Long Island at the work of putting up telegraph poles. Wet weather came and he caught a violent cold. The heavy work by day, with the fever and pain at night, told on him in time and his courage failed. He saw that he could not work on at that job much longer and if he broke down, what then? Well! he supposed he must do something for a living, and there was one line of work at which he knew he was an expert, so he turned back the good leaf and gave up the struggle. He came to the city and purchased the imple-

ments of an evil trade. The sand bag he made to be used in highway robbery and the other weapon was to take his own life if he should be detected in the crime. He was a desperate man, desperate with that desperation that comes only to those who have tried to do right and found it a failure. The whole outlook is infinitely darker for the defeated man than for the one who is carelessly drifting. At nightfall, he went out to watch for his prey, but unknown to him the angel of the Lord was with him and he surely heard that voice behind him say, "This is the way, walk ye in it," when he tried to turn to "the left hand or the right." God's restraining influence he did not recognize, for he knew and cared nothing for God. He told me that an unaccountable something stopped him every time, and then some words that I had spoken in prison, though he had only received them at second hand, rang in his ears. I do not know what they were, but it was one of those instances where the bread cast upon the waters comes back after many days to bear its unexpected fruit, like the grains of rice that whirl in the waters of the Nile and some day find a lodgment, and rear above the muddy stream the harvest of future blessing. So the dreary long night through, that fight between good and evil raged, and all the time the weary feet tramped the city streets.

When morning came, afraid of himself, despairing and desperate, he turned to us and asked me to take the weapons that only meant to him temptation. Hope Hall was not opened then, but we were looking for a house and I told him of our plans, assuring him of a hearty welcome when there should be a place for him to come to. It was wonderful how cheering words and human sympathy seemed to encourage him. Once more he began to hope for himself, and a firmer, more determined expression chased away that of miserable despair. After we received from him the promise that he would still try and do right at any cost, we advised him to return to the work on Long Island, telling him we would send for him at the earliest possible moment. He took a copy of the little Day Book which he was to read with us morning and evening as a reminder of his promise, and each day he wrote just a line to say how things went with him. That somebody cared, seemed to make all the difference in the world to this struggling soul. He had refused to take any money from us as he had some of his earnings left, and he was far too independent to wish to secure that kind of aid. His letters showed a spirit of bravery despite difficulties, and the greatest gratitude for the little we had been able to do for him.

Just as soon as Hope Hall was rented and the

officer put in charge, we telegraphed for this "boy," and he became the first inmate. He turned to with a will at floor scrubbing, window cleaning and painting, taking the liveliest interest in preparing the home for those who would soon be free to claim it. As new "boys" came, he was ever ready with a loving word of welcome. In a few weeks, he found Christ as his Saviour and then the greatest change took place in the whole man. The crushed, hunted, distrustful look vanished, the hopeless stoop left his shoulders and with head held high, he had now courage to look the world in the face, while the eyes were bright with joy that had before expressed such pathetic despair. He took so much interest in the Home that he was made Sergeant, and remained in that position until he left us to take a place in open air work as a brakeman on the cable cars. He worked faithfully and honorably at this occupation until his last illness, which was sudden and short. He died in the home of Christian friends whom he had met while at Hope Hall, and who gave him the loving sympathy which he so needed in that last hour. His own mother had refused to see him or own him, since his return from prison. She did not even come to his deathbed, for when her heart at last relented, it was too late; she could only sob over the coffin of the boy

who had so longed to see her and had been denied. "Is it true that ——— ——— went to your place and became honest?" asked an officer of me in Sing Sing, and when I told him the story of this changed life, he said, "Well, I would never have thought it possible. He was a criminal through and through and we certainly expected to see him back here to die."

I entered my office one morning to find a very worn and travel-stained wanderer awaiting me. He was a tall, raw-boned man, with a face that perhaps the criminologists would have liked to classify. The stern line of jaw denoted fighting propensities; his eyes had the furtive, hunted look of one accustomed to being suspected and across brow and cheek was an ugly scar. A more dejected, hard looking fellow could not well have been imagined and the worn-out shoes and dust covered clothing were fully explained when he told me his story.

He had been a crook ever since he had been old enough to gain his living and having had no home influence, but that which was evil, and no teaching to lead him to the right path, the wrong one was very faithfully followed to his own ruin. He had had several imprisonments and when the League was started in Charlestown, he was in the last year of his term. He did not make any religious profession, nor did he connect himself

with our organization, but he did gather a vague inspiration for a better future. He determined that he would go out to try and find honest work. This he sought to do before appealing to us, having the mistaken idea that he had no claim upon us, because he had not joined our League. He had never done honest work in his life, and little did he realize how hard it would be to find it. But those first days of unsuccessful effort opened his eyes to the difficult road he must tread. With no trade, no character, no references, no friends, and with the criminal past stamped on face and manner, how was he ever to get the much needed first chance, and yet he did want to try and be honest. His appearance was certainly against him, and when his money was gone, the outlook was most discouraging. Just at this point the policeman acted the part of fate and "ran him in," not because he had committed any crime, but to prevent him from doing so. He looked suspicious as he walked about seeking for work, and so naturally was thought to be on mischief bent.

That night when the door of a cell clanged behind him and he looked around on the narrow, confining walls, a deep realization of his failure swept over him. "Prison, prison, is it always and forever to be prison?" he groaned and throwing himself on his knees, for the first time

in his life he prayed. It was the desperate prayer of a man who had come to the end of his own resources. He simply swore to God that if He would help him out of this difficulty, he would give Him his life and start right afterwards. How many have made like vows in the dark, to forget them straightway when the sunshine is given unto them again! The next day in court when he feared at least some months of imprisonment because of his past record, some one unknown to him said a good word in his behalf, and he was discharged. He left the court room with but one thought and that was to make straight for Hope Hall. He had no money and knew no one who could help him, but he felt that he had but the one hope left. The man who has lived by his wits is not of the beggar class; the thief and the criminal can show stern resolution and suffer much privation in the new life, but they will not beg. This man walked from Boston to New York, and when I had heard the story very simply told in his own rough way, he turned and said with a pleading pathos which no words could convey, "Now Little Mother, will you give me a chance? Is there any hope for me?" There was no insincerity or treachery in those dark eyes as he asked the question, but a beseeching anxiety as if on the answer hung life or death. Very gladly did we bid him welcome

and he became a very happy and intensely appreciative member of the Hope Hall family.

Never shall I forget his face as he said a few farewell words to his comrades the night before his graduation from the Home. He was still the angular, awkward fellow; there were still the stern jaw and the disfiguring scar, but despite them, the face was wonderfully changed and as he spoke with the deepest feeling of the new life that had come to him, his countenance was so lit up with joy and peace that it appeared transfigured. It was hard work he undertook, but he was a proud man each morning, as he arose at four o'clock and started out to gain an honest living with the certainty in his heart that he was making a success of it. When the first pay day came, he called at my office, coming in straight from work in toil-stained clothing, and with his hands bearing the marks of toil which mean so much to us. I was occupied at the time and my secretary demurred at disturbing me, but he insisted he wanted only a moment. As I rose to greet him, he clasped my fingers in his two strong hands and with tears filling his eyes he said, "Little Mother, I just came to thank you. I can't tell you what the Home has meant to me but I want my comrades to know I am really grateful." And then he drew from his pocket a little roll of bills and pressing it into my hand he

said, "That is the first honest money I ever earned. I want you to use it for the 'boys' who are now where I was once." As I smoothed out the fifteen crumpled dollar bills, their value to me was far beyond that inscribed upon them, for they would have refuted the prognostications of those who told me of the ingratitude which I should meet and the worthlessness of the treasure for which I was seeking in the dark mines of state prison.

Within our prison walls there are naturally many men of foreign birth, some of them very ignorant of our language, coming from the illiterate classes even in their own land. In some cases they have drifted into trouble, some from ignorance more than intentional criminality, while many are of the helpless, shiftless classes who do well enough when sternly governed but are very poor masters of their own life and destiny. Herded together in the great slum sections of our large cities, their surroundings on the outside prove a very hotbed of evil. Friendless and unable to make themselves understood, many of them have a very poor showing in the court-room and after their term expires, go out into an unwelcoming world with no chance of escaping recurring troubles in the future.

On one of my early visits to Clinton, the third prison in New York, I was spending a long

day in interviews. I believe there were over seventy names on the list who had specially asked to see me. The warden had very kindly placed his private office at my disposal, and he himself introduced each newcomer, then leaving us alone that the man might confide in me what he wished concerning his needs or those of his loved ones. Hour after hour passed quickly and towards the end of the day the warden introduced a very forlorn-looking man by a name which was almost unpronounceable. It was his own name undoubtedly. No man could have happened on such an alias. As I stepped forward to greet my visitor, the warden passed out behind him but I caught a merry twinkle in his eye that made me guess something was amusing him. My secretary afterwards reported that when he reached the next room, he told her the joke. He had introduced to me a Greek, whose English was as mysterious as his own language and my interview was likely to be somewhat one-sided. I certainly found it so. That my new friend was very forlorn and unhappy was plain, that he needed sympathy and comfort was evident, but the only words I could understand despite his most conscientious and voluble efforts were these, "Me poor man, me no friends." Between other remarks delivered with sighs and entreaties, those words always remained the

tenor of his thought. I assured him with word and gesture I would gladly be his friend, but beyond that I could convey little comfort, so I just sat and smiled on him, and fortunately a smile is the same in all languages. When our interview came to an end and he departed to his cell, I was inclined to believe it had been fruitless and that I had given him no possible help.

On my next visit some months later, lo and behold! my Greek's name appeared once more on the list. This time he impressed me again with the sad news of his friendless condition but added, for he knew a little more English, that he wanted to be good and managed to convey to me the information that he was praying for God's help. That time we prayed together to the One who understands the language of the heart whatever words the tongue may utter, and after a few more smiles and a number of efforts at coherent conversation, we parted. At my next interview I saw a very marked change in my friend. His face had lost its forlornness and he pointed very proudly to the little V. P. L. button he wore on his striped suit. He assured me with many gestures he was praying to God for help to be good and then he turned, perhaps by habit, to the remark "Me no friends, me poor man," adding somewhat to my dismay he was soon coming home. Mentally I said,

"And what shall we do when you come," but though I foresaw difficulties, I also felt that it was to just such that Hope Hall could perhaps prove a veritable haven of refuge. I assured him again that we were his friends and I told him to come straight to me on his discharge.

Some months passed, our Greek learned still more of our language and to him the long, looked-for day of liberty was very slow in coming, while to us in our busy life of work, it was a surprise when one day we entered our office to find him sitting there dressed in his new suit and beaming with smiles. As I had had all the interviews with him in prison and I foresaw this one would be somewhat lengthy, I turned him over to my secretary after a few words of greeting and commenced my morning mail opening. Sometime after she came in to report, and I saw that her eyes were full of tears. The story certainly had its pathetic side, though parts of it made our hearts beat quick with indignation.

He had been discharged from prison two days before, and had received ninety-seven dollars which represented his earnings for over-time (then allowed in this state) and the money he had deposited with the warden on entering the prison. Realizing his deficiency in speech, he had provided himself with plenty of matter to prove his connection with the Volunteers. In

one pocket was his Day Book more treasured than comprehended; in another the latest *Volunteer Gazette* and in yet another his certificate of membership in the League, which made a very formidable roll. Besides these possessions he proudly wore on his new suit the little white button with its blue star and motto. Arriving at the Grand Central Depot which was but fifteen minutes' walk from my office in an absolutely straight line, he was faced by the strange, bewildering rush of the great city, and realized in an overwhelming manner his foreignness to all around him. He could not ask his way of any member of that jostling crowd, and was not sure enough of his powers of expression to venture on any hurried inquiry. He therefore sought out a police officer, imagining that that official was there to protect and advise bewildered strangers. Then he commenced his explanations. Unrolling his V. P. L. certificate which had upon it among other things a letter from my pen and a small photograph he explained, pointing to the picture, "Me want go Mrs. Booth. Me belong Mrs. Booth." The word, "Volunteers" upon the certificate was large enough to be clearly read and my picture had been more frequently than I had wished in the daily papers for over twelve years, but neither of these things seemed to enlighten the officer of the law, for he

only shook his head and then, to get rid of the man, directed him to quite another part of the city. Each time he realized himself astray he would repeat his request to some officer and point to my picture, but none seemed ever to have heard of me, or was it that it seemed sport to play with this poor simple soul with the queer broken speech and prison-made clothing? Any way when I heard the story I felt tempted to send my picture to be placed in company with those of my "boys" in the Rogues' Gallery, that it might be studied by the officers of the law so that they might know where to direct those who so sorely needed my help and protection.

When night at last closed in on the city, he found himself in a down-town section where a policeman impressed upon him that it would be too late to find me, and directed him to a low saloon above which he might lodge for the night. Naturally, when he entered, he was recognized at once as a simple foreigner and moreover as one newly from prison. It is known that men from prison have some little money with them, so he was at once offered drinks. Though he was in many things ignorant he had gained one or two firm ideas as a League member and to these he would adhere stubbornly. He promptly refused to drink saying with a finger on the little white badge, "Me no drink. Me belong Mrs. Booth!"

Had he been able to express himself clearly, and had his poor ignorant mind fully grasped the teachings of our League, the higher motive and loyalty to the Great Captain of our salvation would have been his strength, but what he was has to be remembered and to him a human friend, meant hope and escape from despair and forlornness. Finding that he would not drink at the bar they escorted him to the room he was to share with three other men. They were drinking and card playing, and there again he was offered drink and a cigar. He reiterated the positive declaration which formed his few words of explanation, "Me no drink! me no smoke. Me belong Mrs. Booth!" and I fancy the denizens of the saloon were better informed than the police as to what lay behind the words. Well for him he resisted that drink, for had he taken it there was little chance of his waking to find his money safe. Realizing the danger of robbery, he sat up all night that he might not fall asleep. In the morning he had gained a little worldly wisdom and, as he asked, slipped a silver piece in the policeman's hands and lo! in a few minutes he was at our office door, for that officer knew just where to find us. When we talked with him later before sending him to Hope Hall, he handed all his money over to me to bank and as he counted it out the bills were all ones, ones,

ones, whether fives, tens or twenties, and I had to explain their value.

Before sending a man to the Home, we generally inquire what his occupation has been, if he has had any in the fields of labor, and also what he did in prison, so as to be able to suggest the best department of work for him at the Home, and to know what kind of place to secure for him on graduation. When this question was put to our Greek, it seemed to mystify him. We tried to make it as clear as possible and at last as we repeated slowly, "What did you do in prison?" a light of full comprehension broke over his face. "Oh! me wheel shoes," he answered. I thought he meant "heeled" shoes but at that suggestion he shook his head most decidedly. It was my turn to be mystified, for I had never heard of "wheeling shoes" as a part of the shoemaking industry. Further careful inquiry revealed the fact that his labor had been the wheeling of the barrow, in which shoes were taken from the workshop to the storehouse, probably the only duty for which they found him well adapted. At Hope Hall we set him to weeding the garden and a very happy inmate of the Home was our poor friendless Greek. When he graduated, it was to start in business for himself at a bootblack stand which we purchased for him with the money he had laid by. He has

made a success of his work and has for years occupied a very good corner in the heart of the business portion of New York City. An ever-ready smile greets the officer whom he knew in the Home when he chances to pass that way, and he enjoys the cleaning of shoes much more than the "wheeling" industry.

It is not hard to picture what the end of this story would have been, had there been no V. P. L. and no Hope Hall. Coming a stranger to New York, he might easily have been robbed that first night. When men are robbed, especially ignorant foreigners, who do not know how to appeal to the law, they generally resent it and show their resentment by fighting. Men who are found fighting are arrested. On his arrest he would have been detected as a newly returned prisoner, and the witnesses against him could easily have proved his violent and murderous attack. He would have been sent off again to prison with an extra long term because his offense, committed so soon after release, would have proved to some minds that he was an incorrigible criminal. Once more in a prison cell with heart growing bitter and mind enraged, he would have murmured, "Me poor man, me no friends."

# X

## WIVES AND MOTHERS

I HAD been presenting the cause of our "boys" in prison at a drawing-room gathering in a company of the wealthy and fortunate, whose lives were very remote from need, suffering and hunger. I passed over the main branch of our work, to one that has grown out of it, and told of the dark, sad shadow that has fallen on many homes, bringing untold suffering to the helpless and innocent. After the meeting was over, a lady made her way to my side and clasping my hand she said very fervently, "I do thank you specially for one thought you have given me this evening. I have seen the outside of state prisons and have always regarded them as places full of evil-doers who justly deserve what they are suffering, and there with me the whole question has ended. I never for one moment realized that these men had wives and mothers and little children. Of course, if I had stopped to think, I would have seen that side of it, but I never gave the question a thought." I believe there are very many who, if they confessed the truth, would have to admit the same thing. This perhaps saddest side of the question hidden away in aching hearts and

shadowed homes does not flaunt itself in the press, does not beg on our streets nor appeal to us through Christian publications as do the needs that can be classified. Yet the need is there and it is very real and urgent. If there are eighty-four thousand men to-day in our prisons, think what a vast number of sorrowing hearts must be bearing their suffering and shame in the outside world!

I think my work has become doubly dear and sacred to me since I have realized that I could go to these "boys" as a messenger and representative of their mothers. Very grateful have I been for the name "Little Mother" which they have given me, for I feel that I go not to impress my own personality upon them, but to revive in them the sacred memories of the past and if possible, to help in bringing the answer to the many mothers' prayers that for so long have seemed fruitless of result.

I once received a letter from one of the men in which he said, "Little Mother, as you talked to us on Sunday in the chapel it was not your voice I heard, but it seemed to me my mother spoke again from the long ago, and it was not your face I saw, but her face that came up before me as I had seen it in the days of my childhood." This thought has meant a great deal to me and having come to feel how true this is of my min-

istry to many of the prisoners, I have found I could take to them a double message, first from their God and then from some loved one, the very mention of whom aroused all their better nature and awakened purer thoughts within their minds.

I always believed that mother-love was next to Divine love, the most beautiful and unselfish of all affections, but the belief has been intensified since I have learned to know the many sorrowing mothers of our "boys" in prison, who despite all they have suffered; shame, disappointment and wrong, have loved on and stood faithfully by their erring ones. I believe such mothers are the great hope and very sheet anchor to men who can never quite forget them, however far they may go astray and disregard their prayers and wishes.

Just as we find within prison walls men of every class, so the homes on which the blow has fallen are widely different, and the needs represented are often in great contrast. One mother surrounded by wealth in a home of ease and comfort may not need material help, but craves that which comes from true heart sympathy. Another may, in her old age, be left utterly destitute and have to face sickness and want, yet with both, the boy in prison is the first thought, and any one who can help him is welcome as

their friend. No work especially organized to help the mothers and families of men in prison and commencing with them, could be successful. They are not to be found by inquiries from tenement to tenement; they certainly would not be attracted by an announcement over an office building proclaiming it as a bureau for their special assistance. They have their pride and self-respect and rather than go and seek help or pour out the story of their woes and wrongs to strangers, they would hide away and bear their burden alone.

From the very commencement of our prison work I realized that it must be a movement of natural growth, that each want as it was found must be met by the method that developed to meet it. As the men grew to know and trust us, they began to tell us of the dear ones at home. Many a time a young man in prison under an alias would confide his real name, and give us the duty of breaking gently to his dear ones the knowledge of his whereabouts. With others there was the feeling that long silence spoke of unforgiveness at home, and it was for us to try and bring about a reconciliation. Very often the distress and suffering of his family has caused a man worry almost to the point of madness and a letter has been hurriedly written asking us to go post-haste and render the needed help.

On the other hand, as the men became interested in the League and the new experience deepened in their hearts, they wrote the good news to their homes, sometimes away over the seas, and back from every part of this country, and from very many distant lands came to us loving, grateful letters from mothers who felt they could pour out to us the heart-longings and anxiety that had been so long borne in solitude. The tie of friendship and understanding is much stronger and draws hearts together much more surely than that of charitable bounty. We can do far more in every way for these women for the reason that we are introduced to them by sons or husbands. My dear friend and helper, Mrs. McAlpin, has especially taken this work on her heart, so far as the prisons of this state are concerned, and through her talks with the men, she has been enabled to put us in touch with numbers of families who in this great city were in dire need of a helping hand. From the western prisons the work comes to us mostly through the mail, and we find that this new and unexpected field of usefulness has developed so rapidly that we have had to appoint one worker to do nothing else but visit the families thus referred to us. Before I write some of the stories of those materially helped, I want to speak of the mothers who have been cheered and comforted by good mes-

sages of their boys returning to the right path within prison walls.

At the first meeting ever held in Sing Sing a little company of men took their stand for the new life, and among them was a tall, fine-looking young fellow whose deep emotion and evident sincerity very much impressed me. He stood with his face sternly set, showing in its pallor the effort that it cost him to rise before that great crowd of fellow-prisoners, and yet, determination was written in every feature. As I watched him, I saw the tears course their way down his cheeks. It was such a striking and earnest face that the chaplain also especially noticed him and found out his name for me. Shortly afterwards my mail contained a letter which brought me into closer touch with him, and then my interviews from time to time gave me his history link by link, until I knew the whole. It is one that has undoubtedly a thousand counterparts. He was the only black sheep of a bright, happy family, the youngest son and his mother's darling. Associating with wild companions, he went astray, saddening and bringing constant trouble to his home. His mother and sisters clung to him, pleaded and wept in vain. He went on in his wild course until he got into trouble in his home state, from the consequence of which his people saved him. Then he broke away entirely from

home restraints and came east. By this time drink had gained a strong hold on him and he mixed in his drinking sprees with the roughest crowds. One night he was arrested in a saloon with a gang that had committed a burglary, and soon after found himself in state prison with a long term of years to serve. In that lonely cell a picture hung over his cot that carried his mind away over the country to the sunny Californian village where she, whose face smiled down upon him, prayed still for her boy, knowing nothing of this last disgrace. After enduring silence for some time, his longing for letters from home compelled him to write, but he hid the fact of his imprisonment, giving the prison number of the street as the place where he was working. It happened however that a friend left their home village to visit in New York state, and he was commissioned by the mother to see her boy. Inquiring for the street and number in Sing Sing, he found the prison, so that sad news winged its way to the distant home. Through this trial the mother's love stood firm, and the most tender, helpful letters came month after month to the little cell where time passed all too drearily. When this boy took his stand for God and became a Christian, he wrote the news home, and very shortly I received a long, loving letter from his mother. She rejoiced in the change that had

come to her boy and then asked all about his prison life and surroundings, begging me to watch over him and to be to him as far as possible what she would be, if she were near enough to visit him. For two years we corresponded, and I had much good news to tell her of the boy's earnest, faithful life. Once we met and I shall never forget that mother's face and words. I had been having a heavy programme of engagements in San Francisco and was resting between the meetings. The news came that two ladies wanted to speak to me, and I sent my secretary to explain that I was very weary and had to rest. She came back in a few moments to tell me their names, and at once I went to them, realizing that it was the mother and sister of that "boy" in Sing Sing. When I entered the room I found a truly beautiful young girl with a sweet, refined face, and a dear old lady dressed in widow's weeds. As she rose to greet me, the words died on her lips and she could only sob, "Oh, you've seen my boy, my boy!" When she was calmer she told me she had come forty miles that day to meet me. She had been ill in bed and her daughters tried to dissuade her from the effort, but she said, "I could not stay away; I think it would have killed me to miss this chance of seeing one who had seen my boy." Then she began to talk of him in the tender intimate way only a mother

can talk. She asked me many questions that were difficult to answer: just how he looked, what they gave him to eat, what his cell was like, what work he had to do, etc. When we parted, she put her hands on my shoulders and kissed me saying, "Oh, you have lifted such a heavy, heavy burden from my heart," while the sister added, "There was an empty place in our home we never expected to have filled again, but you have brought us the assurance that our boy will soon be there with us again." As I turned back again to my work, I said to myself, "It is all worth while, if only to bring the grain of comfort to such loyal, loving hearts."

On his discharge from prison the "boy" came to us, waited at Hope Hall until I could get his ticket, and then went back to the home from which I received the brightest news of their happy reunion. During the late war, he served under Dewey at Manila and I have a letter written just before he entered into action, a letter full of earnest Christian joy and courage.

Many a time, as I travel, I meet mothers whom I have not known through correspondence, but who seek me out to tell the glad news of homes to which a real change has come with the dear ones' restoration, with a new purpose in life and the strength to fulfill it.

Here is a letter lately received from a village

in Germany:—" Dear Mrs. Booth:—Since a long time I had the intention to write to you and to express you my deepest thank and veneration for the Christian love and care you have for my poor son Hans, which is fallen so deep. You may imagine what a relief it is for my heart to hear that in foreign land is found a soul who take such interest at heart for my poor son, to guide him again to Christian love. For me it is unfortunately quite impossible to do anything for him, only I pray for him to the Lord, who never wills the death of sinner and who alone can reform him truly. I beg, dear Mrs. Booth, help him as much as you can for the Saviour. All you have done and your exhortations have quite won his heart and he is full of trust and confidence in you. You may believe with what grief and sorrow I ever think of my son. He once got such a good education, and was trained with care and love in a positive Christian home. May God you assist in your blessed undertaking that Hans may turn over a new leaf and be again a useful and smart fellow. I am so very sorry that I can do nothing at all than lay all my cares and troubles in your hand and assure you that I feel exceeding thankful. You will oblige me very much if you will be so kind to give me once a little note upon my son and please excuse my bad English. I hope you will understand it

but I have no exercise at all in writing. I hope this lines will come to your hands and with kindest regards, I am, Yours truly."

As I lay down the letter, I have a vision of a dear soul with her dictionary at her side laboriously putting these thoughts on paper and I imagine the longing and yearning with which her mother heart goes out over the seas to her boy in prison, beyond her reach, but not beyond her love.

Often the letters have come written in German, French or Italian, but in all the same story "watch over my boy, give me tidings of him." Once or twice the letters have been from those in high social position, and often the poorly written efforts of a very humble folk, but the message is always the same. Love and forgiveness, yearning through the shame and sorrow. Several times we have had the joy of sending the boy back to his far away home, and getting good news from him when he is again under the safest, strongest influences on earth.

Perhaps the most pathetic letter from over seas came to me from a mother in Australia. I had had the duty of breaking to her the news of her son's imprisonment, and afterwards forwarding his letters to her each month and receiving hers for him. She was an earnest Christian and though quite old and feeble, wrote him very long

and loving letters by every mail and prayed without ceasing that she might see his face once more before she died. At last a letter reached me that told me of a very dangerous seizure; the doctor had informed her that she had perhaps but a few hours to live and at most could not last many days. The writing was very shaky and in many places almost illegible, while gaps here and there told where the pencil had dropped from the fingers that were already growing cold in death. She had had to rest often to gain strength to finish it. Her letter is too sacred for reproduction. In it she poured out to me her anguish and heart's longing for her boy. She told me his weak points, and begged me to stand by him. She asked me to break the news of her death and to pass on her last message. The last few lines were literally written in the anguish of death, and she closed with the words "if you get no news by the next mail you can tell my boy his mother is gone." The next mail brought a letter but it was black edged and from another member of the family, telling me that she had died with his name on her lips.

Such instances as this add much to the sacredness of our work and to our intense desire for its lasting results where so much is often at stake. I remember one young man in Sing Sing whose earnest efforts to do right made him a very

marked and successful member of our League. He was among the first to enroll and when I talked with him personally I found him very happy in his new found experience. He told me frankly that his past had been a wretchedly unworthy one; and it was not his first imprisonment. Drink had been the cause of his downfall every time, as it is with most of the "boys," and he had over and over again broken the law when under its influence. "But," he said, "that is not my worst sin; what I feel most now, is the wrong I have done my poor old mother. I have well nigh broken her heart, and over and over again brought her sorrow and disgrace, but she has loved me through it all. She won't believe I am half as bad as I really am." With tears and the deepest emotion, he told me how he would with God's help make up to her what she had suffered. Sometime later the mother called on me. She came to tell me of her joy over her son's letters. He had told her that at last her God had become his God and that her prayers were answered. No pen could paint a word picture of that mother's face. Transfigured with the divine love she felt for her wandering boy, as she told me of all his good points and tried to make me see as she did how well worth saving he was. Behind the love there were so many lines of pain and anxiety, that coupled with her

story, I could realize something of the tragedy, but the tears that fell so thick and fast were of the quality that would make them precious in heaven, and they surely would not pass unremembered by the One who fully knows and understands all the suffering of which the human heart is capable.

On a Good Friday, I saw him in prison for the last time. Very cheerily he greeted me with the news of his approaching release and promised he would come to our office the first hour of his arrival in New York. On my engagement list I entered the initials of his name, that when the day came, we might watch for his arrival. The morning hours passed; we thought some slight delay had arisen. The afternoon went by, still he did not come. Very reluctantly we closed our desks and went home. The next day we waited and watched and still no news. I suppose if I had had any "Job's comforters," on my little staff, they would have suggested to me that the first saloon had proved too much for him, and that our returning wanderer had most likely drowned all his good resolves in the same stuff that had been his undoing in the past. Fortunately we were all of us workers on the sunny side of the street and evil shadows were not hunted up to cloud our confidence. We felt sure all was well, and the mail four days later told

the story. He explained how sorry he was not to report at headquarters, but on reaching New York his brother had met him with the news of the mother's illness and he hurried at once to her side. The next day he had found work and he added, "Now, Little Mother, I fear I shall not be able to see you, for I must work every day for my mother's sake, for you know what I have promised. I want to build up a home for her and make up for the sorrow I have caused her in the past." Some days later the mother came herself to tell me of her boy's home-coming, and the tears that fell now were tears of joy. The most pathetic part of the story to me was this; she said that, as the time grew near for his home-coming, the old dread crept into her heart. She had so often watched for him, not knowing in what condition he might return, or whether he would come at all, that the habit of fear triumphed over her faith, and though his letters had been so different and his promises seemed so earnest, her heart misgave her. She said, "What do you think my boy did? The very first thing he went to the telegraph office and sent me this message, 'Don't worry, mother, I am coming.'"—Ah, God grant that we may help to flash that message to the hundreds of sorrowing mothers whose hearts turn anxiously to those opening prison doors! Are not all the efforts, all the toils, all the dollars

expended well worth while to bring back brightness and comfort to these hearts, that for so long have sat in the gloom of the most tragic bereavement? As the months passed, good news came to me of this happy family. The young man joined the church in the village where his mother had long been a respected Christian. He became attached to temperance work, and by his warnings many other young men were induced to take the pledge. He and his brother went into business; they prospered, and at last they fulfilled his ambition, building with their own hands the home that they had promised to their dear old mother.

These are stories of mothers; what of the wives and little children? It seems hopeless to give any adequate idea of that sad side of the picture. In many cases the imprisonment of the man means absolute want and suffering to the innocent family. I remember a very strong letter I received from one of the "boys," in which he said, "I cannot tell you, Little Mother, how bitterly I reproach myself for the suffering I have brought upon my wife and little children. My lot is easy to theirs. They are the real sufferers for my wrong-doing. I have shelter and clothing, with three meals a day provided by the state, while they have to face want and perhaps absolute starvation. No words can describe the anguish

I suffer on their behalf." This is only too true. The state takes away the mainstay of the family and for them there is suffering worse than his to be faced. I do not blame the state; I am not so irrational as to plead that for their sake he must be given his liberty, but I do say that some hand must be stretched out to help them, and that here is a great field where there is no fear of misspent charity.

Many of these women have not been accustomed to work for a living, and when left to their own resources they have no trade or any means of livelihood, while such work as washing or scrubbing often proves far too heavy for their strength. They are not the kind of women who can beg. They dread making an appeal to public charity, because they would have to tell of the husband's whereabouts and of his crime, and in their loyal hearts they long to shield him, so alone they battle on, trying to keep the wolf from the door and to hold the little family together, until they almost drop with exhaustion or are driven to desperation, when faced with temptations that are worse than death itself.

I remember a letter I received one day from Sing Sing with a special delivery stamp announcing its urgency. The man was at that time a stranger to me, but he turned to us in this darkest moment of despair. The letter was written

as the gray light of dawn crept into his cell. It told how all night long he had walked back and forth and how in his anguish and helplessness, he felt as if his brain would give way. He had a young wife and baby; she had had a hard unequal struggle, and was not a woman of strong nature or any skill as a worker. At last he received a letter in which she said she could stand the struggle no longer. She was at the end of her resources; she and her child could not starve. Anyway, an easy though evil way, was open and she was going to take it. "For God's sake," he wrote, "go and find her and save her from what would be worse than death." Before many hours were passed we had her in our care. She was sent to a position and her little one watched over and the good news flashed back to that anxious heart behind the bars.

Another man who was serving five years in prison, wrote to us to say that he had heard his wife and five children were in dire need. I copy the report of the case as it stands on our books from the pen of our representative who investigated and afterwards watched over the family: "We took hold of this case about two years before expiration of sentence. Eldest child, a girl, was eleven years of age; next a boy of nine; all the rest were little ones. Baby was born three days after father went to prison. Mother worked from

five in the morning until dark in the summer, picking peas and other such work for sixty cents a day. I have waited until eight o'clock at night for her to come home. Children were all locked out in the street for fear they would burn the house down. They spent their time making mud-pies in a lot. The neighbors used to help them sometimes, but they were poor themselves. They reported that the children often came at night under their windows and cried for bread when they were starving. When first found, they were half naked and very hungry. When fed, which had to be done at once with what could be purchased at a near-by store, they fell on the food like little wild beasts, literally tearing it in their hunger." For two years we helped them with clothing, food and in many ways. Then the father came home, found work and has written us very grateful, happy letters.

Here is another story: The husband was an almost prosperous man, keeping a county hotel and having an interest in a factory. He was murderously attacked by a man whom he afterwards shot, as he thought, in self-defense. Had he shot the man on his own property, he would have been guiltless in the eyes of the law, but as he shot him after he had forced him from the gate, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. For four years his wife fought bravely

with starvation. When we found her, the three children were down with scarlet fever; they had previously had measles. The mother worked at the hardest kind of labor for a living, and was herself sick, first with malaria and then with hemorrhages of the lungs and was often found in a fainting condition. We took this family on our list, and Mrs. McAlpin also helped them generously. Had they not been tided over the hard places during sickness, severe cold and in other emergencies, this family must have gone under in the unequal struggle. On his return from prison, the father found work and was enabled to provide them with a home. Now they are comfortably off, and the mother with proper care is regaining her health.

A German who had held splendid positions before his incarceration, wrote us in great distress about his wife and children. She had with indomitable courage maintained herself and the little ones, but at the time of writing, he informed us, he had just received news that the children were down with diphtheria and that she was quarantined with them, which meant of course, that she was unable to work, hence the necessary money for rent and food would not be forthcoming. We sent at once to investigate, paid the rent and sent in a supply of groceries, with some of the nourishing food which the sick children so much

needed. From that time we kept them under observation, until the father's return made them independent.

Another letter sent from prison led us to hunt up a family where we found the woman helpless with a new-born babe, and she had besides a boy of seven and a girl of three and had just buried her eldest child, a girl of nine years. They had gone behind in rent and as she was in no condition to work, we sent her with her two little girls to our Home. The boy was placed in a school where he is having a good education and every care. We have watched over and provided for the family ever since, and hope shortly to get the father paroled so that he may again make a home for them.

I found the following report of a case on my desk the other day: "Husband . . . has five years' sentence only just commenced. Wife is a young woman, has a boy four years of age and very shortly expects another little one. She has lived with her newly-married sister, a mere girl, whose husband is now out of work. Wife has been sick lately, and is very delicate. Rent due and liable to be dispossessed any time. Has had nothing to eat to-day. Borrowed a little coffee from a neighbor. We gave her two dollars to meet immediate need. Woman was very grateful, said that two dollars was just as if she

had fifty, she was so glad of it. This is a worthy case. The woman was clean and neat, though both she and the child have practically no clothing. Clothes should be furnished immediately from our storeroom. These are really brave people."

Entering my office one day I found a very young girl waiting to see me. She was clad in a cotton gown, though it was bitter winter weather. She seemed to be numbed, not only with the cold, but with the awful lethargy of despair. On her lap lay what looked like an old blanket, but as she talked, the blanket fell back and disclosed the naked body of a tiny babe not three weeks old. It was blue with cold and cried in the weak, gasping way that speaks of starvation. "Yes, I suppose it is hungry," said the child mother, "but so am I; I have had nothing to eat for twenty-four hours." The father was in prison and her people had turned her out because they could not be burdened with the unwelcome little one.

Another young mother came to see me, but she was of quite another type. Not the helpless apathetic girl, whom sorrow robs of feeling, but a woman young, strong and beautiful, but maddened by despair. As she pressed her tiny babe to her heart she said, "What am I to do? We must live. I cannot see my baby starve and yet I can't get work, for nobody wants me with a

babe at my breast. It is a hard, hard path in this great city for the woman who wants to keep good and do right, but it seems, for the one who goes wrong and does evil, that there is plenty of good food, fine clothes, warmth and shelter. I don't want to do that, I can't sell my soul, so I was on my way to the river, which seemed the best place for baby and me."

In just such cases as these the friend in the hour of need can save the misstep and point out the better, safer way to the weary, stumbling feet. We have two Children's Homes, to which not only children, but mothers can be sent, to tide them over until strong enough to work and get a little home together.

Here is another case of a woman who made a brave struggle to keep herself and her three children alive. She worked early and late and for a long while kept her home together. Sickness came and then starvation stared her in the face. A delicate, refined woman, she could not beg; she was finally discovered almost too late, seemingly sick unto death. Carefully and tenderly she was nursed back to health. One child died and was buried. Thank God, not in Potter's Field, but where the mother could see where her darling lay. As she recovered from the delirium of sickness, she asked of what the baby died. "Tell her that it was sick," the doctor

said, " its little heart stopped, but never let her know that her child starved to death." And she never did. The father is home by now, and works hard every day. The door is shut upon the sad past. They are happy children and thankful parents.

We try to keep a fund to meet the needs of these families ; a little help in meeting the rent, providing suitable clothing for the children who attend school, money for medicine or nourishing foods when there is sickness, may just tide them over and prevent great misery, without in any sense robbing them of their self-respect or making them dependent upon charity.

These stories give you only a glimpse of the wide field. They could be multiplied by the score, aye by the hundred, but even then the much that lies beneath and behind the work, must be seen and felt to be understood.

## XI

### SANTA CLAUS RESURRECTED

CHRISTMAS is a sad season in prison, because it is, perhaps of all days, the one when thoughts most surely circle around home and when pictures of past happy days shine out in vivid contrast to the lonely narrow cell with its bare walls and heavy barred door. But if it is a sad day for the men within the walls it is equally so for many of the families who have to abandon the thought of any Christmas cheer to brighten their poverty.

Naturally fathers in prison, whose little ones are still intensely dear to them, grieve much over their inability to do anything towards the cheering and gladdening of the children's Christmas. We have for several years now made our Christmas greeting to the families of our "boys" a special feature of our work. We have a big book in which a list of our families is carefully recorded, every child's sex and age, and, as far as possible, size, can be found therein. Besides this we send to the New York and New Jersey prisons some weeks before the holidays, and ask all men who know that their dear ones are in poverty, to send us the home address that we may

visit them, and in this way compile a very complete list of those who need help. Naturally this has proved a great cheer to the men themselves, and in many instances has touched hearts that were hardened against any religious influence. Kindness breaks down barriers that preachment or argument would only cause to close the tighter.

A man who had been quite indifferent as to himself and full of ridicule and abuse towards members of our prison league, was talking to some fellow-prisoners about the dire poverty of his family, distressing news of which had just reached him through the mail. A League member overhearing, said, "Why don't you write and tell the Little Mother?" "Much notice she would take of it," he answered. "Why, I am not a member of the League—she don't know me—I would get no answer to my letter." The V. P. L. boy persisted and at last the other said, "Well I'll test it, but I don't expect anything." Sometime afterwards he received a very happy letter from his wife telling of the big parcel of things received, food, clothing and toys for the children. He was deeply touched, and acknowledging this to the boy who had advised him, he added, "Look here—it's time I made a man of myself. I've neglected my family and made them suffer, and here are strangers who think

enough of them to help them. It's time I did the same." He joined the League and became a most earnest member, getting ready to be the kind of man who could on his return make a happy home, where in the past he had only brought sorrow and misery.

Our preparations for Christmas have to begin several weeks beforehand. Our idea has never been to prepare a big banquet to which the hungry are bidden for one good meal. Many of our families are out of town or scattered from one end to the other of this long island, and even could we gather them all together, we want our help to be more lasting. The Christmas tree decked for the children is a treat always enjoyed by little ones, but even that sends them back to a very gloomy home that seems all the colder with its fireless stove and empty cupboard, after the glitter and brightness of the festivity. Our idea is to make the home, poor though it may be, the centre of rejoicing. By visiting beforehand and by our close knowledge of the circumstances, we can tell just the needs of each family and can prepare accordingly. Our plan is to give to each child one good suit of clothing,—to provide a supply of groceries, a turkey and money sufficient for fuel and vegetables. Some needed article of clothing for the mother is added and then toys and candies for the children. We

could hardly send the mothers instructions to hang up the stockings for us to fill, for sometimes the nuts, candy and oranges, would drop through these much-worn articles, and often there would be no stockings to hang up. We therefore buy stockings wholesale and fill them at our office. Not only do we attach its mate to each filled stocking, but we add another pair so that every child may have a change. I could not speak of the need of the Christmas season without speaking also of the way our friends have helped us to meet it. The girls of Vassar and Smith Colleges have year after year dressed dolls and collected toys for us. Many of the children in happy homes have done likewise, as also in some of the private schools. Boxes containing these gifts commence arriving in the weeks before Christmas and each new supply is received with acclamation by the little staff of workers who know the joy that it will bring to the hearts of our Christmasless little ones. The chapter of "King's Daughters and Sons of Hartford, Connecticut" —organized three years ago to help my work, is especially generous in its Christmas effort. Barrels of clothing and toys can always be relied on to come from that source, and so much personal work and careful thought is expended on the gifts that they seem doubly valuable.

We raise a Christmas fund by newspaper ap-

peal and from our regular donors, and then follow our shopping trips armed with a list of the ages and sizes of my many boys and girls and babies. I descend on the stores to amaze the salesgirls with the size of my family, which proves a mystery until they find out who I am. Trousers for ninety or a hundred boys, dresses for an equal number of little girls—sweaters by the score and baby outfits by the dozen, are soon chosen, and our storeroom at headquarters becomes almost like a department store. We spend about a hundred dollars for shoes of various sizes and always lay in a large supply of toboggan caps, which are a special delight to the boys.

The work of packing is not easy, where the special garments and toys must always be assigned to needs and ages. When the parcels for distant families are ready, they are shipped by express, but all within reach are given out personally. Our Hope Hall wagon goes from home to home the whole day before Christmas.

The poverty revealed is pitiful in the extreme and the gratitude of mothers who receive this Christmas cheer is pathetic in its intensity. To many of the little ones it has been explained that no Santa Claus can come to their home because father is away, so the surprise is all the greater. One family we heard of through the letter of the eldest child, a ten year old boy, in which he told

us that their "Santa Claus was dead." He had a baby brother thirteen months old, another aged six years and three little sisters. The child added, "Mother goes out working but she can't get us anything." You can imagine the joy that the Christmas gifts caused, when we resurrected Santa Claus in that top floor tenement.

Last Christmas, in all the homes visited, not one could boast of fire or fuel. It would have been mockery to give out the turkeys and chickens without also giving the wherewithal to cook them.

In one home just under the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge was found a mother and her three little girls. They had nothing to eat in the cupboard and no fire to drive the damp chill from the two rooms they called home. Everything however was neat and clean. The woman was found weak from sickness and starvation. She had just buried a two days' old baby. When the gifts were displayed, she was too overcome to speak but her tears showed how strong was her feeling. The children were wild with delight but when the eldest commenced to tell something, the mother tried to hush her; urged to go on, she said—"This morning we had just three cents left—we went out and got tea with it and made it good and strong for we could have nothing to eat." This is the mother's letter received a day or two afterwards —

"I am very thankful to you for your kindness to my children and myself. It was a big surprise to us, as it is three weeks since we had a good substantial meal. I have given birth to a girl baby and buried her a day after she was born. I was laid up two weeks and not able to work, nor could I provide the necessary things for her burial, but the children of the neighborhood made up a collection for it. You can see what a hard struggle I have had to fight. If you could possibly get me some sewing to do, so as to make my rent, it would be a relief to my heart."

One Christmas, when I was able to do the work of distribution personally, I entered a home on the fifth floor of a big tenement. There was a small living room and kitchen combined and a windowless bedroom not much more than a cupboard in size. A mother and five children lived there. There was no fire in the stove. The cupboard door was off its hinges and it certainly was not needed, for there was not even a loaf of bread in the house. The only occupant of the room when I entered, was a little girl of about eight years. She sat at the table with her doll. It had neither legs nor arms and, having lost its wig, there was a terrible looking cavity in its head. She was trying to cover its far from handsome body with a piece of red flannel. I was

glad to know that a beautifully dressed doll would be hers when the Christmas parcels were opened. The mother when visited a year before had said to us in her broken English, "No happy Christmas till he come home," pointing to the picture on the wall of the father who was in prison. Is it a wonder that her face looked hopeless, and the tears fell fast when we asked her how long that day would be in coming, and she had to answer "Twenty years."

Late one Christmas eve, when the work of distribution was nearly over, the officer who had charge of that duty for the upper part of the city, climbed up the many gloomy stairs of a great tenement and knocked at the rear door. All was dark and quiet, but when the knock was repeated she heard a child-voice answer, "Wait a minute, please." In a few moments the door was opened, and in the light stood a lovely child. She was about six years old and clad in her little white night-dress, with the halo effect of her golden curls, she looked like an angel. The child seemed surprised to see a visitor but with much natural courtesy she asked her in, placed a chair for her, and then with an "excuse me, please" she flitted into the inner room to slip on her dress and shoes, explaining also that she must "see to the children." The bedroom revealed two other little ones—a boy of about

four and a baby of some sixteen months whom the little girl tucked in again very tenderly after dressing her brother, with the instruction "You must keep covered up, baby dear." Then she returned to talk to the visitor. Mother, it seemed, was out trying to collect some money which was owing her for work. Did she know about Santa Claus? Oh! yes, she knew all about him, only mother said he could not call at their house this year. A look around, however, showed that he was much needed. There was neither food nor fuel in the house, but it was scrupulously clean and the children's clothing, which was very threadbare and much patched, showed that the mother's loving fingers had done all that could be done to keep them neat and clean. Waxing confidential on the subject of Santa Claus, the little girl added, "Johnny and I have been listening and we thought we heard him whistling down the chimney. Didn't we, Johnny?" Johnny, round-eyed and wide awake by now assented, and then the interest of both children was riveted on the visitor by her startling announcement that Santa Claus' wagon was down below in the street. On being asked if she would like a doll, if such a treasure could be found in the wonderful wagon, her little face lighted up with joy and she cried impetuously, "Oh, yes!" But immediately checking herself

she added, "No thank you, ma'am, I think I am too old, but baby would like it, I am sure." Poor tiny mother with the care of the children on her shoulders, she had already learned to sacrifice, and to realize how short a childhood is the lot of the children of the poor. The scene can be imagined better than described, when parcel after parcel was piled up on the table and the children, joined even by the baby, danced around in an expectancy of delight. It was a happy Christmas after all, and the father in his prison cell, heard the echo of it afterwards. He has been home now some time and the little family is prosperous once more. They have now no fear that Santa Claus will only "whistle down the chimney" in passing as he whirls by to the more fortunate ones to leave them hungry, cold and forgotten.

Our representative who has for two years taken the greatest interest in this work writes as follows:

"This is the size of the baby's shoes. The mother had put the baby's foot on a piece of paper marking around it with a pencil and forwarded it to Mrs. Booth with the above explanation. The baby got the shoes. There is no way however in which we can mark the size of the hearts that went out in pity and compassion to bring a happy Christmas into the homes of

hundreds of poor mothers and little children where the man of the house was gone. Often the little ones had said, 'Oh! mamma, where is papa?' The mother with aching heart and tearful eyes gave an evasive answer, for the father was in prison. Whatever may have been the guilt of the man behind the bars, there can be no doubt about the misery and wretchedness of these poor creatures, bereft of the bread winner. The struggle to keep the gaunt wolf—poverty—from the door was greatly enhanced last winter by the scarcity of coal. In nearly all the houses I visited in New York City the fire was out. In some coal was only a memory—driftwood, broken boxes and cinders from ash heaps having been used. Some children doing nothing but search from morning till night for anything that could be made to burn.

"In one family the old grandfather, too old to work, keeps the house, a boy of thirteen works in a Broadway store and he is the sole support of the family. Another brother of seven forages for fuel all day, and the little sister of five goes to school.

"On the upper east side, among other things we gave a little girl not only a doll but a beautiful little trunk full of clothes that had been sent with it. Her brother of ten received a sled and they both got new clothes. These two children

simply went mad with joy. Running into a back room, they stood and screamed aloud to vent their feelings and the good woman, a hard worker, said with tears in her eyes, 'My man will be home this time next year.' For five years she had fought the wolf alone. This woman walked the streets of New York (being evicted the very day her husband was sentenced) all night long, with her two little children clinging to her skirts. Finally she procured a room —a wash tub and an old stove, and she and her little ones lay upon the bare floor every night for six weeks with nothing to cover them but the mother's skirts.

"Christmas was made happy for another woman and her two children. She works in a box factory and in good times earns three dollars and a half a week. The poor are kind to each other. This woman said after we had given her her gifts, 'I wish you could do something for the woman in the cellar. She is worse off than I am.' In the cellar we found a forlorn starving creature with a baby and a boy of seven. The husband was paralyzed in one arm. He made only one dollar the week before. We attended to the immediate wants of this family and since then have sent clothing, for the woman and children were practically naked. The help she received was so unexpected that she walked up and

down the miserable foul cellar pressing her baby to her breast, and saying over and over again like one in a dream, ' I never expected it.'

" We turn into a side street and stop at a house —one of the kind Dickens liked to describe. No one lived on the ground floor—at least all was dark, and the front door without a lock banged upon its hinges. Rails upon the staircase were partly gone and the cold wind rushed through the hall. At the top of the stairs is a smoky oil lamp with broken chimney. We knock at the first door to the left and a young girl timidly opens it. Two little children, five and seven respectively, peer out suspiciously from behind their sister, who is in this case mother of the house. She is eighteen years old, and when we explain our mission, the door swings wide open, for food, coal, and clothing mean a happy Christmas. The little ones set up an impromptu dance and the girl stepping back, shades her eyes with her hands. She is crying but it is because she is glad. Each of the little ones has a doll by now and one has crept off to the corner and is talking to hers in mysterious doll language. They do not worry any more about the visitor because they are absorbed in their treasure. Finally we get them interested in sundry little dresses that the man from the wagon below is bringing, with a turkey and other good things, until the little

mother of the house hardly knows what to say but she says as we hand her a good sized bill, 'Oh! thank you sir.' I can never tell you all that the 'thank you, sir!' expressed. So with a merry Christmas we left them all overwhelmed with joy.

"Near the top of a tenement on the west side I find a mother and two little girls and a tiny baby. No fire—two bare rooms cold and cheerless. They all have scared faces. One can see they expect good from no one. After a little, we gain the confidence of the poor mother. We bring out dresses, stockings, warm undergarments, things to eat, chickens, and besides that, we leave some substantial help to warm the room. Then the mother begins to cry softly and the little girls are so wild with delight that, smiling through her tears, the mother tries to quiet them saying, 'children, have you gone mad?' As I turned away from home after home they sent back the message, 'May God bless Mrs. Booth and may she never be hungry,' and wished for me the same good blessing. Never be hungry! that is the key-note, the best thing that these poor souls can wish to the more fortunate, is that you may never be hungry. What a story there is in that sentence."

When this message from the chilly cheerless homes was brought to me by our officer, strong

man as he was, the tears were in his eyes, and to my heart the words opened up a whole vista of struggle and suffering. "May you never be hungry!" We should never think of giving such a wish to our friends. Why? Because we have never known the horror of the struggle with that gaunt wolf at the door. With these poor mothers he is an ever present nightmare. It takes all their strength, all their time and thought, to hold him at bay. Should they lose their work or be laid aside through sickness, he will force an entrance and some of them have seen that dark day more than once, when his cruel fangs have been at the throats of their best beloved and he has crushed the little ones to the ground beneath him. To them, that wish embraces a condition of rest and satisfaction, of comfort and safety, almost beyond their imaginings. So to those who are kind to them they wish the best they can think of. May they never be hungry! Never know the dread and anguish, the weakness and struggle, of starvation.

## XII

### PRISON REFORM

ALL punishment should tend to reform. The thinking world of to-day recognizes this and the tendency in our country is so thoroughly one of advance, that to keep to the old systems of prison government would be impossible. Even during the past seven years, I have seen great changes within our prisons and I want to speak in the strongest terms of the earnest, faithful, humane work, accomplished by many of our wardens whose administration I have watched. Prison reform is work that cannot be accomplished by outside agencies. It is the specific duty of those placed in charge of these institutions, and they alone can fully see and understand the needs of the great problem, for they are closely and practically in touch with it. Outside workers can of course help very materially in educating public opinion, and in influencing legislation, but so far as the work of improvement in our prison system is concerned, that must be accomplished by those who are studying it, not as students of criminology, anthropology or in theory only, but as students of the prisoner and his requirements.

Every year in this country there is a gathering of our prison wardens, when questions of the deepest moment are discussed and opinions exchanged. The papers read, ideas advanced, and interest manifested, should prove to the onlooker that these men are not contented to run in a prescribed groove, but that advanced ideas and radical changes are being most strongly advocated. My personal experience has made me admire the deep interest and earnest efforts of the wardens whom I have come to know, but I have often wondered if the public understands how much their work is often hindered and thwarted by politics. Many expenditures that the warden sees are necessary for the improvement of his prison, have to wait, despite his urgent plea, because it is well nigh impossible to get sufficient appropriations in some of our states for the prisons. Money spent by the state on the criminal population, is looked upon by many as an extravagance. It would be found easier to get half a million dollars for the beautifying of some state building, than ten thousand for the improving of the sanitary condition of a prison cell house. Yet in the long run the latter expenditure might prove a tremendous saving to the state.

Then in every state throughout the country, the appointment not only of our wardens but of

all officers in minor positions in the prisons should be taken out of politics. I have seen splendid, able men in charge thrown out because of a political change in the state. They had put their heart and soul into their work, and through years of experience had made themselves familiar with the needs and difficulties of their position. They were in the midst of much needed changes, when they had to step out, and turn over the reins of government to some new man, who however good, and able a citizen, was absolutely new to the conditions in state prison, and would have to begin at the beginning and learn it all over again. I believe that this in the past has retarded much good work at prison reform. Then again in some of our prisons the wardens have been terribly handicapped by the class of men whom they have had under them as officers. In many instances these men have been ignorant and utterly unsuitable for the handling of the prisoners. Good work that the warden might accomplish has been thwarted by them, and yet he has had his hands tied, having neither the power to dismiss them, nor to choose and appoint others.

In some states these unfortunate circumstances have been corrected and in one or two, political influence has no control in prison affairs. The prison officer who is able and efficient and who

advances the best interests of the men should be retained and valued, and only the one who proves unfit should be removed. It is the interest, the reform, the health, the usefulness of the prisoners, that should have first consideration. What right has a governor to sacrifice them to please a party or a man who worked for his election. A thousand, two thousand or perhaps three thousand helpless human beings, for whom the state is responsible, are at stake. We cannot disregard this fact.

The appointment of chaplain has also been political in some states. What a travesty on the sacred office! There can be but one standard by which to choose the spiritual adviser of these souls in darkness. They need the most spiritual, consecrated, self-sacrificing, hard-working pastor who can be found, and any other would do more harm than good. Above all, both chaplains and wardens must be men who believe in the possibility of the reformation of those under their charge. The prisoner is very quick to discern the pessimistic attitude of others. No one can do satisfactory or effectual work who does not truly believe that it will be successful, or at least that there will be something to show for it.

Picking up an English book on the prisons of the old world I read the following sentence, "The governor of Portland Convict Prison said

to me one day, I have only known two cases of real reformation in thirty-five years." What a ghastly confession of unfitness for duty! What are our prisons for, if not for reform? Is this vast expenditure by the country for its police and detectives, its courts of justice, its prisons and prison officials, to be thrown away so far as the vast army of prisoners is concerned?

Most assuredly not in this age of civilization, and I am confident no warden in this country would ever give voice to so self-accusing a statement. If he did, however, he would have his fellow-wardens to reckon with, and after them the great public would cry shame on him, and I venture to say that the resignation of such a man would be demanded at very short notice. There is a pitiable side to this for the man himself. What has he to show for thirty-five years of service? A prison well guarded, men kept in their hideous bondage without dangerous mutiny, going like machines through the given routine of hard labor, bodies clothed and fed with only the average death rate, but no poor soul bettered or made more fit to live in freedom or face death happily. That statement can be taken as the representation of the old idea which was created with the old system, from which sprang the abuses that were only to brand, intimidate and degrade the man, who be-

ing beyond reform was to be kept in check by breaking his spirit, and keeping him as far as possible in a position in which he could do the least possible harm to the community.

Not so long ago many of the branding and degrading ideas were in existence even in this country. I can remember the time when men were hung up by their wrists for hours in torture for some infringement of prison discipline. The lock-step was at one time to be found in all our prisons, the short hair cut and the hideous stripes were universal. In prison after prison now the lock-step is being abolished, and a manly military march takes its place. Within the next few years it will in all probability pass out forever.

In many prisons the stripes have been replaced by a neat gray or blue uniform, and they are worn only by men who have been refractory or attempted to escape. While we have the right to punish the wrong-doer, and it is only justice to himself as well as to the community to do so, we have no right to brand him. Anything that tends to mark a man or that will send him out into the world incapacitated to take his place among the free again, is a cruel wrong and should be abolished.

In speaking of their doubt and distrust of the man who has come from prison, people have

quoted to me the unfavorable impression that has been made upon them by the manner, the bearing, the very speech of recently discharged men with whom they have come into contact. They have repeatedly said to me that the shuffling uncertain gait, the head hung down, the shifty look in the eye, and the fact that he can hardly give a straight clear statement of what he needs, have all gone to rob him of confidence, and people have turned away merely to say, "I could not think of employing such a one." Alas, in the past, that picture has been only too true of many a long termed man in the first days after his discharge from prison. But what has made him so? The world says a guilty conscience, a shiftless unstable character; he merely shows what he is, a criminal born! No! I answer he is a criminal, branded, and in his poor crushed body and hopeless mind, he carries the cruel marks for which God Almighty will demand justice in the great reckoning day. A thoughtless world quick to condemn and damn the one who has fallen, a brutal system that drove and lashed instead of helped and raised the one in servitude, will be held responsible for the shattered minds and ruined bodies that can be found amid the driftwood in the great under world.

Do you know what the lock-step is and does? The shuffling column of men is not allowed to

step or march with a soldierly swing, but is so near together that the arms of one man rest on the shoulder of the one in front of him, and they walk with the feet interlocked, so that each step must be a sliding shuffle. Let a man walk thus during the years of his imprisonment, and there is not a detective or police officer, who could not pick him out in the city throng, however well he might be dressed. People complain of the shifty eye, the downward glance of the man who they say betrays by it the fact that he cannot look the world in the face. Are we not taught that habit is second nature, and what is the habit in which these men have been drilled for years in some of our prisons? They are forbidden to look up from their work in the workshops should any one pass through the room. If any one meets them in the prison corridor or in the yard they are to keep their eyes down, or, worse still, to turn their faces to the wall. Take an innocent man and drill him on pain of punishment by this rule, and on his discharge he would unconsciously do the same thing whenever accosted, and hence very probably give the impression of insincerity. Then what of speech? Many men to whom I talk in prison or on the days subsequent to their discharge, stutter and stammer helplessly, becoming sometimes painfully embarrassed, as they try to explain themselves. What is that but the re-

sult of long silence? I do not argue that it would be wise or possible for these men to be allowed to talk freely in work shop or in cell house, but I know prisons in which talking is permitted during recreation in the yard, and I do believe that the outside world is unfair in drawing conclusions from an affliction brought about by the silence system.

All these things should be remembered when we stand in judgment on the man returned from years of confinement. In this country all our prisons save one, are on the congregate system and solitary confinement is only used as a punishment. No one who has been closely and sympathetically in touch with his fellow-men can fail to realize the unfortunate influence of the solitary system. Human beings must become warped and be disqualified for after life when they have been robbed of all companionship. The man shut away with his own thoughts and those often of the worst character, is doomed to a deteriorating influence that spoils the brain, and often disqualifies the whole nature for reinstatement in a rational after life.

Only the other day I heard from one of my "boys" of two ways in which men have sought to save their reason when long in the dark cells for punishment. They are I believe much practiced and well-known in prison. One is to take a

pin into the punishment cell with you—then you divert the weary hours in that pitch darkness, by throwing it up in the air and when it falls you hunt for it on hands and knees and thus give yourself an occupation. But, alas, the officer may know of this, hunt for the pin and take it from you, so perhaps the other practice is more sure to keep the brain from madness. That is the spelling of words backwards. I have at the present time in our Hope Hall a man who can spell anything just as quickly in that fashion as in the ordinary way, and when asked why he taught himself what seemed such a useless accomplishment he answered, "I saved myself from insanity by it." Ah! we who have freedom and light and happy companionship, know nothing of the battle and struggle, the gloom and the shadow, that these men have had to face and live through, and those who would help them and would deal wisely with this problem must learn to so understand it that they will be charitable and patient in their judgment.

The greatest blessing to the man in prison is work. I had the opportunity of witnessing the cruel evils of enforced idleness, at the time all work was taken from the men in the prisons of New York through the labor agitation. A bill was passed for the purpose of protecting the outside market from prison-made goods. It was

passed and suddenly put into effect, without giving the prison officials proper time to prepare for the consequences. Three thousand five hundred men in state prison were thus forced to sit idle in their narrow little cells day after day. Some lost their reason! There were several attempts at suicide, one man flinging himself from the sixth gallery of the Sing Sing cell house to a certain death. The wardens, sympathizing deeply with the men, did all in their power to help them, and felt keenly the difficult position in which they were placed, and the inhuman cruelty thus inflicted upon the men. Naturally the plea of the world on the outside, is that the working man must be protected but the state is equally responsible for these men in captivity, and it cannot afford to say as some of the agitators for free-labor, brutally said at that time "Well, let them go insane." Warden Sage of Sing Sing told me to come as often as possible to the prison, as he appreciated the opportunity of letting the men out for some hours in the chapel for my meetings. At Dannemora they were allowed to go into the empty workshops in charge of the guards that they might have a change from their cells, and in each prison they were allowed exercise in the yard once a day. It was a grave time of anxiety for the officers and of distress to the men. The matter was at

last adjusted by the provision in the law allowing the prisoners to manufacture all goods needed by state institutions, and in the large state of New York that is quite sufficient to give the men all the work they can do. By degrees, many new industries were introduced into the prisons, and the problem so far as New York is concerned was satisfactorily solved. No sooner was this plan made a success, than criticisms were heard from labor circles again, and they would undoubtedly have taken this work also from their more unfortunate brothers, if it were possible for them to change the law. Their sentiments seem to be "let the convict go insane, what does it matter to us. The State must look after him." This is a very short-sighted view. It should not be forgotten that many of these men belonged to the world of honest, free labor yesterday, and will belong to it again to-morrow. If they are spoiled in physical strength and brain capacity, the world will sustain a loss, to say nothing of their claim as human beings to common justice and humane treatment. Ask any warden to name the one thing which above all others would be productive of evil habits, insubordination and mutiny in prison and he will answer "idleness." The public should allow no legislation that interferes with the proper occupation of all able-bodied men in prison. There are ob-

jections that can be brought against the contract system, but no change should be made where it is in vogue in a prison, until such arrangements have been made as will enable the officers to introduce the change without leaving an interval of idleness.

The system of using the money produced by the work of the men for their own support is of course perfectly wise. Out of the money realized, the state can always make enough to clothe and feed the men and in many prisons after that, there is a large surplus. Great benefit could be derived by using part of the man's earnings for the support of his destitute family. It would be a comfort to the man himself if it were made possible for him to earn money for them, and it would prevent the innocent from suffering with the guilty. We are sufficiently in touch with this side of the problem to realize how much suffering this would alleviate and how many lives it would save. It does not seem right that a man should be cut off from his obligations towards wife and children and aged parents, because of his wrong-doing. Punishment should curtail his own pleasure, should place him where he could learn his lesson, and should save the community from his depredations, but it should not cast an honest woman on the streets, leave little children naked and hungry, and wreck the

homes which have sheltered them. It may be argued that this is one of the unfortunate circumstances that are beyond the power of the state and cannot be avoided. I have talked with gentlemen in authority over our penal institutions, who have felt that it was not only possible but should be undertaken as a duty of the state, to make the man support his family by his work in prison.

Good libraries and the night schools instituted in many of our prisons are most important aids in reformatory influence. In some of our prisons, very fine libraries are already in existence, and in those where books are lacking and the state has not yet been able to provide them, donors of libraries could find no more suitable fields for their gifts. There are three hours every evening, and all day on Sundays and holidays, when the men have time to read. To many, this will represent the only good opportunity for study in a lifetime. The hard working man in the tussle of life outside, comes home at night too weary to wend his way to the library, and even were he not tired, there are home duties to occupy his attention. But the man in prison can turn to books to pass the weary hours, and in so doing widens his point of view and educates himself. There is in every prison a percentage who are uneducated, and also a foreign element

unfamiliar with our language. Many a man who writes to me regularly has told me that all he knows of writing and reading has been learned in prison. We know that ignorance and the lack of proper perceptions of the duties and responsibilities of life, are among the things conducive to crime, hence the educating of the ignorant during the years when such education could be encouraged or even enforced, could not fail of good results. To increase the facilities for teaching the men and to establish day-schools also, to make it a part of the prison labor for all the uneducated to learn at least the rudiments of education, would prove excellent economy for the state in the long run, and an inestimable benefit to the prisoners themselves.

I believe I speak not from my own experience only, which has been limited to seven years, but from that of many of our oldest wardens, when I raise my voice against long sentences and in favor of a parole system. The long weary years in prison unnerve—unman, and often break a man down physically and mentally and there is no compensating good to be gained. The shame of detection—the disgrace of his trial and sentence with the humiliation of the first weeks of imprisonment constitute the man's greatest punishment. After that the months and years are ground out one after the other, without produc-

ing any great change except on the harmful and degenerating side of the question. Wardens have often said to me in speaking of certain men, "All that prison can do for that man is done. He is as safe to-day to go at large as he ever will be," and yet in the cases spoken of there were long years yet to be served. The state is not the gainer. The men lose much as these precious years of life pass by. The families are suffering on the outside, and the world at large is robbed of their energies, which, if they have learned their lesson, should be well used in the future. By a good parole system, men when reformed, could have a chance to prove themselves worthy of full reinstatement in the world. Liberty would be theirs before they had lost courage, strength and confidence, and yet the state would have them under surveillance, and, if they proved unworthy, they could be returned to prison. Undoubtedly the knowledge that they were on probation would be a safeguard to many men and would make them careful as to their actions. I very strongly believe however that a parole system to be truly just, should be extended to all men proving worthy, irrespective of the length of sentence for which their crime would call under the old system. I would not say that the man who had stolen a pocketbook could be paroled, and the man who had committed bur-

glary or forgery could not be eligible. Every case must stand on its own merits, and the test should be whether the man has shown signs of genuine reform. Many of the long term men are far more worthy of parole and are far more worthy of trust, than some whose deeds have called for a lighter sentence. Again the thought comes up in this connection that it is the man we are dealing with, and not the crime.

My work has sometimes been called "prison reform work." That is erroneous. "Prisoner reforming" would be more correct. I believe the wardens of this country are the right workers to advance the needed reforms and the best able to do so, and it is the duty of the public to stand by and help them, backing up the legislative measures that they advocate as helpful to the men in prisons. This especially is urged where they have proved themselves earnest and faithful workers on the advance lines of thought in penology. I must not fail to speak of the excellent work accomplished by Superintendent Cornelius V. Collins in New York State, nor of the earnest men composing the Board of Control in Iowa. More such men with the liberty and power to undertake the interests of the "boys" will soon bring about a wiser and more practicable system in our prisons.

## XIII

### DOES IT PAY?

In every enterprise that represents expenditure of money, time or energy, the question naturally asked by the practical business man is, "Does it pay?" The capitalist expects the output of the mine to bring in some substantial return for the money sunk therein, and the quality and quantity of the precious metal workable is of the greatest moment to him.

It is natural that those who have helped with their means should ask the same question of work undertaken for the seeking of God's gold in the deep, dark mine of state prison. If those who have given money to such an enterprise are anxious as to the result how much more must those who have put time, life and strength into the cause desire to see a paying return. Such a work as this cannot be undertaken by any who would enter into it as a fad or give to it leisure hours. It must be a serious life-work and its demands are great on time and thought, strength and energy. Tears, and many trials through dark hours of struggle and disappointment must be endured, while weary days of unceasing toil must be put into the work by those who would

succeed. Naturally, year after year, those who have thus toiled have their day of account balancing when they place what it costs into one side of the balance, and into the other what they have to show for it in tangible, practical, lasting result. Since one has but one life to live, to those who look upon life as a precious talent to be accounted for, the question must naturally be one of the most vital importance.

Very frankly was I told by prison officers, outside advisers, and even by " the boys " themselves, that the result of our prison work would be very small compared to its cost. If, however, we value the victory by the hardness of the fight that won it, gems by the cost of their purchase, the eidleweiss with its snowy blossoms by the long and dangerous climb up mountain crags to gather it, in this field its very difficulties should make the results of greater worth and moment.

It would be obvious folly to claim that such a mission as this is uniformly successful. To refuse to own that there are in it disappointments and failures would be cowardice. In every work that aims at the raising of fallen humanity there must be a certain measure of apparent defeat. The weakness of human nature and the tendency of those who have once gone astray to retrograde, if earnest watchfulness is for a moment relaxed, make failure a very easy matter. Every minister

of Christ's Gospel knows of those for whom he has prayed, toiled and struggled only to be rewarded by their return to the evil thing that has proved too strong for them. Amid the twelve even the Christ Himself had this experience. Avarice proved too strong for the Judas who betrayed Him. Doubt made Thomas forget the teachings and revelations of the Christ as the divine Messiah, cowardice made Peter deny his Lord, and there were many who forsook Him when they should have been steadfast.

If retrograding is found in every field of Christian work, this prison field can certainly be no exception, especially when you take into consideration the terribly heavy handicap these men have from the enemies within and without who must be withstood and overcome at every step. The ever-open door of the saloon, the fellow-workmen or old companions anxious for them to drink the friendly glass, disappointments in losing work, the sneer and slur of those who may have learned of their past, combine to drag them back. Above all, the old habits of evil doing and weakness, that have become interwoven with every thought and act and plan of life are as a fetter upon their progress. These things form a solid phalanx of foes.

I frankly confess we have had our disappoint-

ments, and over them bitter tears have been shed and painful heartaches endured. Some men have proved unworthy, some have proved weak, but they have been the exceptions to the rule. Many thought we would have a majority that would prove unworthy, and but a small minority to remain faithful, but even had it been so, should we have a right to say that the work was not worth while? We have however to record that the many have proved worthy and faithful, and only the few have failed us. It is always a lamented fact that it is just the few who do go wrong, who arrive at public notice, while the multitude who do well are never heard of through the public press, but are hidden away in the quiet, commonplace, workaday world of those who tread the straight path of honesty. I can unhesitatingly say that the results have already shown such a return in homes made happy, lives redeemed and wrong-doers changed into good law-abiding citizens that we, who have made the largest investment, feel a thousandfold repaid. In my journeys hither and thither all over the country, I am constantly seeing the far-reaching results of the work, which, coming at unexpected times and unlooked for places, are all the more welcome.

I had boarded a "sleeper" at one of our large terminal depots, and was bestowing my baggage

beneath the berth in an already-darkened car. A man in the uniform of the road hurried by me, swinging his lantern. After he had passed me, I looked up, and the light must have fallen on my face, for he stopped with an exclamation, and looking quickly to right and left to see if his words might be overheard, he turned to me, and stretching out his hand, said, "Little Mother, I can't miss the chance of speaking to you. You don't know me, but you will be glad to hear that I am doing well, and have been living right ever since I left the place where I met you last. I have been making a good record now for nearly two years, and all is well."

I had changed cars in a western city on a somewhat gloomy day, and while I was re-checking my baggage, a freight train pulled into the depot. One of the crew sprang down, making his way to me with a smiling face and an outstretched hand. "Why I thought it was you, Little Mother," he said as he held my hand in his, blackened and hardened with toil. "I am so glad to see you again, for I have only good news to tell. I went straight home to my people when I left Joliet, and they can testify to the change in me, and now I am leading a happy, steady life, and have proved that it is possible to do so, despite the past. I have worked nearly two years on this road now, and best of all, I am

keeping my promise to God and proving faithful to what I learned as a League member."

Arriving at one of the big Chicago stations I stood undecided on the crowded sidewalk as to which direction I should take. A voice hailed me and I looked up to see a cabman waving his whip enthusiastically at me. Thinking that after the manner of his tribe, he was seeking a fare, I paid no attention. Leaving his cab, he hastened to me to greet me with outstretched hand and smiling face. "Yes," said the officer at my side, "he is one of your boys paroled from Joliet, and lately he has received his full discharge."

I had been speaking in a crowded audience in one of the large churches in the far west. At the close of my address quite a number of friends came forward to speak to me. A gentleman grasped my hand and as I looked into the handsome, intelligent face, I had a faint recollection of having met him before, or was it only a resemblance to some one I had known? As he greeted me, I caught the gleam of the little silver pin worn by members of the Defenders' League, an organization of the friends of the Volunteers. I said most cordially how glad I always was to meet our Defenders, but his hand did not loosen its grasp, and he was searching my face for a more personal recognition. "So you don't know me," he said at last. "No," I said, "I must con-

fess I do not. Where have I met you before?" "It was in Charlestown, Little Mother," came the answer with that thrill of loving gratitude that has so often warmed my heart in the voices of many of my "boys." Could it be? Yes, truly it was a young man who had gone from our League in that Eastern prison years before, and here he was, a prosperous successful business man. "I have brought my mother with me," he said and my hand was laid in that of a sweet-faced gentlewoman, in whose eyes a wealth of love and pride shone through the moisture of tears. That was not all, for he then told me he had been recently married and brought forward a beautiful young girl whom he presented to me with the pride of a true affection. She made the last of the happy trio who lived in the pretty little home in the outskirts of that city, where flowers and birds and almost perpetual sunshine make the shadows of prison bars seem very far away. Those prison days to him are now but the nightmare of the dead years which, through God's grace, will come again no more.

At that same gathering I had started to leave the platform when I found my way barred by a little family group who had waited for me at the steps,—father, mother and three little tots. In a few brief words he told me he was one of my

San Quentin "boys," home now over a year and that all was well with him. Then he left the little wife to tell the rest of it which she did most fervently, describing the earnest hard-working life her husband was leading, and their now happy home, while the tears that could not be kept back, told their own tale of how much it all meant to her and the three little children they had brought with them to see me.

Sometimes it is a motorman who smiles me a greeting as I board his car, or a waiter in a restaurant who drops a word or two that have nothing to do with the bill of fare. Once a cook in white cap and apron ran out to greet me regardless of the crowd of passers-by. Wherever it may be, there are always the glad smiles and the few earnest words that send me on way saying, "It is all well worth while."

Some gentlemen in an office were discussing the possibility of the reformation of prisoners, and questions were exchanged concerning the stamp of men reached at Hope Hall and their sincerity. After the conversation had been carried on for some little time one of the gentlemen said, "Well, I am one of Mrs. Booth's 'boys.'"

A contractor came to seek men from our Home, whom he said he was willing to employ. After he had talked about the character of work and the style of man needed, it was found that

he had himself some time ago, graduated from Hope Hall, and now that he was successful and prosperous, he returned to give the helping hand to others.

As I travel in my lecture trips all over the country, sometimes speaking for four or five weeks every night in a different city, I am brought constantly into touch with new audiences, and in almost every audience, I find some one of my "boys" who, seeing my lecture announced, has come there to greet me with the news of his well-doing. It is all these pleasant surprises by the way that are helping to prove to us how far-reaching and successful the work has already become.

I have written much of our "boys" but what of our "girls"? That question has been asked me many a time, and in the first years of our work I had nothing to report, as our efforts were confined to the men in state prison. They of course present the greatest need. This is evident for two reasons; first, they vastly outnumber the women, and secondly, there are no places for them to turn to on their discharge, while throughout the country there are many rescue homes for women, where girls from state prison can be received. Our work is not in operation in the reformatories, lesser penitentiaries or jails where women are mostly confined. We have kept ex-

clusively to state prison, because the field is so large that time and strength and limited means compel us to draw the line somewhere, and we naturally have chosen the field where the need is the greatest. In many of the prisons we visit there are no women, and where they are incarcerated, there are very few. In New York state for instance, the number is about fifty women to thirty-five hundred men; in New Jersey about twenty women to eight hundred men; in California fifteen women to eighteen hundred men, and so on. Where there are women, we have started our League among them and recently we have had several come home, some being paroled to us while others have turned to us for help when they have received their discharge. Of course, they could not be received at Hope Hall, which is a men's institution, but we have either sent them to the Volunteer Rescue Home or found positions for them at once.

One woman came to us with a sweet little child in her arms, a prison-born baby who had never before seen the outside world. It was a sad story of a hard-working woman yielding to temptation, at a time when woman through physical weakness should hardly be blamed for her actions. The little child that came to share her sorrow was born in jail before her trial, and together they were sent to state prison, when the

babe was two weeks old, on a five years' sentence. They were forgotten and abandoned by the father and husband. After two years she was paroled to us, but in that first return to the world with the babe in her arms she was overwhelmed by bewilderment and despair. She had no home. Her husband had deserted her. One little child had died of grief when she was sent to prison, and two others were in institutions. The first week she almost wished herself back in prison, for she felt her bereaved condition so acutely. We found her a good position in a Christian family, where she has proved a most faithful hard worker. The little one boards with good people near enough for the mother to see her constantly. This woman is receiving excellent wages, and saving her money carefully, and she hopes some day to make a little home for herself.

Another "girl" was a sweet-faced Jewish maiden. The prison authorities hesitated about her parole because she had been very hard to manage in prison, and had been constantly punished. This was probably due to a highly-strung temperament, fighting against the confining high walls and prison regulations. She came direct to us and then went to work in a Jewish family. Every month she reported to us and her bright face and the good news she brought always told a story of faithful effort to do right.

After she had received her final discharge papers, she was married and now has a happy and comfortable little home, with a kind husband well able to support her, as he is a good workman. She runs into my little office constantly with all the news of her life, and advises with me upon every question of importance. Her only sorrow since she came home has been the loss of her first baby, a grief which to her with her intensely affectionate nature, proved an almost unbearable bereavement.

The next woman sent home had served eight years. She was a respectable body who during an unhappy wifehood had suffered much with a drunken husband, and on whom prison life had told severely. "Oh," she said when we first talked together, "do get me a place with people who will trust me. I will work hard and be faithful, only I do want a chance to prove I am in earnest." I sent her to work for friends of mine whom I knew to be earnest Christians, where I felt sure she would receive the kind words and sympathy she needed more than the dollars that would be paid her for her services. They have sent me the best kind of news concerning her. She has proved herself most trustworthy, willing and helpful. In her turn she cannot speak too warmly of her employers and their kindness, and is perfectly contented and happy in her new life.

The next woman was a colored girl. She had served her sentence and it was not her first either, for she had seen the inside of one of our big western prisons before coming east. Born of respectable Christian parents in a southern state, she had been led astray in the city of Chicago, had gone very far down the wrong road and lived for some ten years an evil life. They did not think at the prison that she would come to me, but she did. By a delay of trains she reached the city at 4 A. M. and walked up and down the streets until our office opened. "I tell you, Mrs. Booth," she said, "I'd not have come to you if I did not really want to be good. I know where I could get money and where I could find friends, but I am through with the old life. I do not want to live like that any more. Get me a place. I am not afraid of work and I will prove to you I am in earnest." She is in her place now, happy and hard working and those who employ her, though they know the past, never remind her of it nor have they been given any cause to think of it themselves.

Our last girl to come home was a mere child when first imprisoned. The crime was a terrible one, it is true, but is a woman quite responsible in the first hours of shame-shadowed motherhood? When I heard of the long imprisonment, I asked the question, "And what of the man?"

Oh! the hand of the law that caught the weak, unhappy woman, was powerless to touch him, and she alone bore the weight of shame and punishment. It was just a week before her discharge that she held my hand tight in hers in the prison office and pleaded, "Little Mother, may I come to you? I am worrying so about a place, and don't know what is best to do in the future. I can work and I shall be so grateful for the chance if you will trust me that you shall have no cause to be sorry you did so!"

Such an innocent face was hers, such a willing little worker the matron said she had proved herself to be, and there were at home earnest, respectable loved ones, longing to hear good news of her, so there was indeed every cause to give her the chance she asked. We talk of "by chance" when we might better say "by God's guidance." It was thus unexpectedly that two days before our "girl's" discharge, I met a friend who spoke of going away that week to a beautiful mountain home. "Have you all the servants you need?" I asked. "All but one," she answered. "I have that one for you," I said, and in a few brief words I told her the pitiful story that was to be a secret, known only to the employer. So our "girl" went straight to the very best place she could have found, with a lady who is herself an earnest Christian worker. Cheering

words, busy occupation and beautiful surroundings will chase away the memory of cruel wrong and dreary imprisonment. Here is a letter from the one who employed her.

"My dear Mrs. Booth:—I should have written you before in regard to your girl, but have been so busy since coming here that I have not found time. I want to tell you I am delighted with her and she will prove a most valuable girl. She is capable, willing and so cheerful with it all. She works in such an intelligent manner that it is truly remarkable. She plods right along and does not have to be followed up after she is started at something. She certainly has had good training in the 'big hotel' she talks about having worked in."

Here is the girl's side of the story.

"My dear Friend:—I received your kind letter last night and I hasten to reply. I like my place very much. It is a delightful place! I wrote to Mrs. ——— last week. She was so kind to me while I was in her care that I feel it is a small thing for me to write her once in a while. Mrs. Booth, I do wish you could come to this beautiful spot and rest here, for I know what your labors are for us. I brought my Day Book with me and read it and pray often for God's guidance and blessing. Hoping you are well but not tired, I remain obediently yours," etc.

So as we again turn back to prison to seek yet others still within those gloomy walls, our hearts whisper, "Yes, it does pay, it is all worth while." And why should this work be any other than a great and lasting success? Have we not the right to talk confidently about it, and to glory in it, when we know and acknowledge the source of power, and the cause of the far-reaching influence? The wire used to carry the current from the dynamo has nothing to boast of, the pipes that bring the water from the hills to the city, need not feel diffident in the praise of the water supply or its life-giving results! So we who are privileged to be God's messengers, who can sometimes prove the connecting link between the human and divine, can glory in the blessed results without a thought of self-intruding, for the work is not human but Divine.

The one dark cloud on the otherwise bright horizon is that which has across it written those burning words "financial responsibility." They flash out ominously every time we long to do yet more along the line of practical help for our "boys" and "girls," or for their dear loved ones in poverty-stricken homes. Some day we trust some man of wealth will take this special need upon his heart and so endow this enterprise that our hands and hearts may be free for the work itself. Perhaps the help that will lift the burden

may come from the many, as they learn how much their little share in the responsibility would count in the lightening of our care; or dying, some one may leave behind him for those in prison, a gift that will lay up a mighty treasure in the fair country to which he has passed. I cannot tell whence this help will come, but for it we pray earnestly and without ceasing for the need is desperate, and the burden is all too heavy for those who carry it on. Tremendous, too, is the responsibility for the lives and souls represented by the work.

It may be well to state that "The Volunteers of America" is a properly organized American movement being incorporated under the membership act of New York. We have our duly elected and appointed treasurer and our accounts are audited by a chartered accountant. We publish a yearly balance sheet and, in addition, any responsible person who cares to do so, can go through our books and satisfy himself as to the careful system of bookkeeping. Every gift is receipted for, and monies are most carefully expended. Mr. William J. Schieffelin of 5 E. 66th Street, New York, will receive monies donated to the special prison fund.

The prison work forms but one branch of the movement under the leadership of my dear husband Ballington Booth. It is working along

home-mission lines in many cities throughout the country, achieving among the artisan classes, as well as the very poor, the most commendable result. The local Volunteers in many cities can of course help our prison branch by welcoming and cheering the men who would naturally turn to them as friends and comrades on the regaining of their liberty.

Looking out over the great field, nothwithstanding the difficulties that still confront us, there is one word that shines out supreme, "Hope!" At first it was flashed to us from above because of our faith in the Divine, now it flashes up from below, as we catch the gleam of the grain of gold in the many human souls still in the shadow. So we can go forward with hearts strong to endure, brave to suffer and warm to sympathize, for we know beyond a doubt or fear, that in the last great day of reckoning, we shall find that the toil has paid in that coin which is current in the world beyond.

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